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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17TH 2015

Everyone here at The GEM wishes all our readers and advertisers a very peaceful Christmas. We are now taking a festive break and will not be publishing next week, but we will be back again on Thursday, December 31.

Pupils talk about a 'Christmas miracle' after Lewis makes a shock discovery

PUPILS and staff at West Park Primary in Porthcawl are talking about their own 'Christmas miracle' – after a pupil discovered something very surprising in an old Christmas card, writes PHILIP IRWIN.

Last Thursday (December 10) year-4 teacher Mrs Barrett set her pupils the task of making new Christmas cards by cutting up and recycling some old ones that had been on top of a cupboard for two years.

She told The GEM that Lewis, one of her pupils, was having difficulty cutting through one old card – and then he discovered the problem – he was trying to cut through five crisp £20 notes as well!

Lewis said "I was amazed! I was cutting out a star when my scissors became stuck.

"When I opened up the card, all these notes fell on the floor. I thought I was going to be in trouble!"

He handed the notes – some cut almost in two, but all legal tender – to his teacher and a detective story ensued.

Mrs Barrett said "After a lot of detective work, we finally realised that the card belonged to a friend of the school who has been volunteering for many years.

"It is an amazing tale, as the card had been on top of the cupboard waiting to be recycled by the children for over two years! I'm just so pleased that we were able to find a happy ending!"

When the school discovered who the money belonged to, the owners, who asked to remain anonymous, very generously donated the cash to the school to reward the children's detective work and honesty.

The school's headteacher, Mr Bird, commented: "It was a great Christmas tale in the season of goodwill!"

Class teacher Mrs Barrett is joined by Lewis (top right, holding the Christmas card) and fellow pupils to celebrate the school's Christmas windfall. (Photograph by MALCOLM NUGENT).

Police seek witnesses

South Wales Police have issued an appeal for information after a man died in a two-vehicle collision on the A48, Bridgend, on Sunday, December 13.

(For a report, turn to page 5).

Big changes on the way for black bag collections

by PHILIP IRWIN

RESIDENTS in Bridgend county borough face significant changes to their black bag rubbish collection arrangements – in changes driven by the council's need to avoid financial penalties for missing recycling targets.

The choices offered by Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) are:

• Stay on the existing once every two weeks collection – but with households limited to two bags.

• Move to a once every three weeks collection – with a three bag limit.

• An unlimited number of black bags collected – but just once every four weeks.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 15)

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'Scrapping free parking for disabled will cost £70,000'

– CLAIMS A TORY AM

A TORY regional AM said last week that she has been told it will cost £70,000 for Bridgend County Borough Council to replace or upgrade ticket machines in its car parks so that they can be used by disabled motorists.

Suzy Davies queried how much it would cost the council to scrap free parking for blue badge holders after the council launched a consultation on the proposal.

She said: "Having to change all the machines in those car parks in Bridgend and Porthcawl where they impose charges will set them back £70,000.

"They anticipate increased income as a result of imposing these charges of up to £145,000. I would seriously question this figure.

"They seem to assume that all the disabled motorists who currently shop in Bridgend or Porthcawl will continue to do so once the charges are introduced, but there is no certainty that this will happen.

"Car parking charges are undoubtedly a deterrent to shoppers whether they are disabled or not. It's my belief that disabled shoppers may reduce the number of times they visit the towns because of the cost. Instead, they could go to the many supermarket and retail sites which ring Bridgend. Here, they can park for free – along with everyone else.

"Apart from the morality of charging disabled people to park, I also have serious concerns about the knock-on effects this could have on the viability of Bridgend town centre in particular. Traders have already suffered a drop in footfall since the demolition of the Rhiw car park, which is where disabled drivers used to park so that they can use the shop mobility scooters.

"They are now at Brackla, which is further from the town centre. If disabled drivers are permanently deterred from shopping in the market and town centre because of parking charges, it could drive some businesses over the edge.

"That's why it's important that BCBC scraps the pedestrianisation of part of the town centre to enable people, including the disabled, to drive into Dunraven Place and Market Street, but they seem to be dragging their feet on this at the moment."

Handbell ringers entertain Stroke club

ON December 2, the Porthcawl Stroke Club were delighted that Gilgal Church, Porthcawl, handbell ringers, under the leadership of Shirley Kenifick, gave a wonderful performance of Christmas carols.

It is no easy task, the ladies have to wear special gloves, so that they don't slip, otherwise they could lose the tune as the bells come in various sizes, some of which are heavy to hold.

The performance was opened by Avis Watkins, who gave an insight into handbell ringing, and the origin of Christmas carols.

Freda Rodgers sang a solo, 'I Believe' and Gaynor Barnfield read a lovely poem, from a late family member, about three candles – how the light of our Lord shone on the world and the true meaning of Christmas.

On behalf of the Porthcawl Stroke Club, we would like to thank all the ladies.

BARBARA MATTHEWS

Left of the picture is the leader of the bell ringers, Shirley Kenifick, third in from the left is Freda Rodgers, next to Freda is Avis Watkins and at the far right is Gaynor Barnfield.

The day(s) that the rain came down...

IT seems as if we've had nothing but rain for the past fortnight or so – and the results are obvious – lanes and roads under water, cracks already beginning to appear in tarmac.

Where and when will it end? The following poem, which I wrote the other day, sums it up as far as I'm concerned:

Gwalia Under Water

There's floods along the Teifi,
the Taff is full of rain,
the Cleddau's fit for bursting,
the Towy's like a drain.
The Ely's risen by six feet,
the Usk and Wye are linking.
across the fields no sign of life,
the whole of Wales is sinking.
The Rheidol and the Severn
re wide as any sea,
Rhe Dyfi's drowned Machynlleth,
Now Derby's on the Dee.
The Conway's reached Porthmadog
and Snowdon's been submerged,
The Menai Straits have vanished
Past Bangor wild waves surged.
Above the sound of falling rain,
it echoes through the dark –
There comes the rasp of saw on wood –
someone's built an Ark!
And in the pubs and round the hearth,
in wondrous awe we lie –
and listen to the old men's tales
when all the world was dry.

Phil Carradice.

Who wants to build what and where in the county borough?

Mr P Young – **land forming part of Llangewydd Cottage, Court Colman, Bridgend** – conversion of part of existing workshop/light industrial unit to form new three bedroom residence.

SA Brain & Company Limited – **Jolly Sailor Inn, 1 Church Street, Newton, Porthcawl** – partial demolition of existing brick and stone store, provision of new door and opening and reconstruct new gable end to store.

Samawi Ltd – **land rear Princess Street, Maesteg** – extend period of time of P/10/653/FUL to carry out works for further five years.

Samawi Ltd – **land rear Princess Street, Maesteg** – extend period of time of P/10654/FUL to carry out works for further five years.

Mrs H Morgan – **15 Candlestone Newydd, Broadlands, Bridgend** – retention of use of first floor bedroom as beauty salon.

Mr Jonothon Price – **Graig Farm, New Mill, Blackmill, Bridgend** – prior notification for barn to store agricultural vehicles and winter feeds.

Mr Trevor Adkin – **74 Rockfields, Nottage, Porthcawl** – new 2m high garden boundary comprising wall and fence panels.

Technia Environment & Planning – **former Bryncethin Nurseries and S Wales Wood Recycling, Pant H, Heol y Cyw** – discharge of pre-commencement condition of No 14 on consent.

Mr and Mrs Strange – **74 West Park Drive, Porthcawl** – demolition of existing garage, widen front dormer, new rear dormer, single storey side and rear extensions.

Mr Alan Phillips – **Plot 5, Bryn Road, Ogmore Vale** – outline application for two dwellings.

Mr Jamie Smele – **Collingwood Hotel, 40 Mary Street, Porthcawl** – provision of additional self-contained flat (from 4 to 5).

Mrs E Harsant – **14 Greenfields Avenue, Bridgend** – single storey extension.

Mr G Perrie – **6 Esterling Drive, Porthcawl** – two storey extension.

Sunsave 29 (Court Colman) Limited – **land near Court Colman, Pen y fai, Bridgend** – non material amendment to P/14/337/FUL - to rotate substation 90 degrees and amend fence line.

Sunsave 29 (Court Colman) Ltd – **land at Court Colman, Pen y fai** – two spare parts containers for use in connection with solar farm.

BCBC Regeneration Team – **Maesteg Town Hall, Talbot Street, Maesteg** – fix 24 M8 s/steel eye bolts to two elevations for LED lighting and a bracket for a projector – permanently into stone work.

Mr David Llewellyn – **Ton Bach Farmhouse, Orchard Close off Minffrwd Road, Pencoed** – roof extension and removal of rear single storey annexe.

Mr Roberto Majewski – **14 Penybont Road, Pencoed** – change of use from single dwelling to two dwelling units.

Mrs Belinda Jones – **1 Tre Newydd, Kenfig Hill, Bridgend** – two-storey side extension for an integral garage and toilet/utilities at ground level and additional en-suite bedroom.

New Bridgend centre for St John Cymru

THE Welsh first aid charity, St John Cymru, has found a new Bridgend base after taking on the running of a former day centre.

The charity has completed the purchase of the Minerva Centre in Minerva Street from its previous owners, Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC).

Confirming the deal, Coun Mike Gregory, the council's cabinet member for resources said: "We understand that St John had been looking for suitable premises in Bridgend for many years and once they became aware of this building's availability they were keen to discuss the possibility of buying it.

"The Minerva Centre had originally been built to accommodate day centre activities run by the council for adults with learning difficulties, but a few years ago those services relocated to the Bridgend Resource Centre.

"The Minerva Centre was then used by the library service on a temporary basis to process books before it was declared surplus to the council's requirements. We are therefore pleased to sell the building, particularly to an organisation that makes such a worthwhile contribution in our local communities."

"The sale reflects the council's drive to enable more 'Community Asset Transfers', where the management of surplus or under threat facilities can be transferred to voluntary organisations, town or community councils, or community groups when appropriate."

St John Cymru's main headquarters is in Cardiff, but the Bridgend centre will enable the charity to make a real difference to the people of Bridgend county borough.

Keith Dunn OBE, chief executive for St John Cymru said: "Our volunteers are absolutely delighted to have found a new home. This much needed facility will make a real difference to us and we will be able to expand the services that the charity has to offer the community, such as first aid training, volunteering for young people and adults, and helping to meet our vision of putting a first aider in every street in Wales. It is hoped that the new centre will be up and running early in the New Year."

TOURISM APPOINTEES

FORMER Porthcawl Chamber of Trade president, Chris Smart, has been appointed vice-chairman of the Bridgend Tourism Association (BTA).

A past chairman of the now-defunct Porthcawl and District Tourist Association and a one-time leader of Porthcawl Town Council, Mr Smart was elected a director of BTA two years ago.

"I am delighted to take up this position, as I am passionate about tourism and believe it is vital to the Bridgend economy," he said.

Also at the monthly board meeting former Porthcawl Mayor Coun Mike Clarke was appointed a director of the BTA.

HIGH TIDE TIMES

(UNTIL DECEMBER 24)

The high tides listed in this week's GEM are those in Porthcawl. It should be remembered that along the coast, high tide times will vary. For instance, in Barry, the high point will be 20 – 25 minutes later.

DATE	Time AM	Ht M	Time PM	Ht M
17 Thur	10.14	9.2	22.41	8.8
18 Fri	11.09	8.8	23.39	8.6
19 Sat			12.12	8.6
20 Sun	00.48	8.5	13.13	8.6
21 Mon	01.59	8.6	14.33	8.7
22 Tues	03.11	8.8	15.41	9.0
23 Wed	04.14	9.2	16.43	9.4
24 Thur	05.11	9.6	17.36	9.7

While The GEM makes every effort to check the accuracy of tide tables, we recommend that anyone putting out to sea, or walking in an area where they could be cut off, should check with a tide table specific to their location.

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Published by: Glamorgan GEM Ltd., Graig House, 53 Eastgate, Cowbridge. CF71 7EL. Printed by TMP.

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Member of BAVO Board of Trustees, deputy mayor Coun Reg Jenkins and his consort Mrs Theresa Jenkins, Ruth Marks, chief executive officer of Wales Council for Voluntary Action, John Rose, director, Wales of the Big Lottery Fund, and Heidi Bennett, chief executive, BAVO.

BRAVO, BAVO!

Volunteers group celebrates at AGM

BAVO – Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations – recently celebrated its past year's achievements at its annual general meeting held at Bethlehem Church Life Centre in Cefn Cribwr.

The umbrella organisation set up to develop and promote voluntary and community action throughout the county borough, BAVO has had another busy and successful year, but a year that has been characterised by significant funding issues, presenting many challenges for the organisation and the voluntary sector as a whole.

In the presence of Janice Gregory AM, deputy mayor of Bridgend county borough, Coun Reg Jenkins and his consort Mrs Theresa Jenkins, Ruth Marks, chief executive officer of Wales Council for Voluntary Action, John Rose, director, Wales of the Big Lottery Fund, BAVO members and trustees were given a snapshot of BAVO's work over the last year.

Heidi Bennett, BAVO's chief executive officer said: "BAVO received over 2,000 enquiries in the year. We helped set up 31 new community groups and enterprises; placed 257 people into volunteering roles; trained 723 community members volunteering locally and helped local groups raise over £1.7million to support their causes. Full details of all our past achievements can be found by reading our latest annual impact report at www.bavo.org.uk

"BAVO has received over a 25 per cent cut in its core funding in recent years and we know that the wider sector is also struggling to continue to deliver when demand for services is increasing. BAVO recognises this can't continue and are encouraging all partners to focus on really doing things differently."

A call was made for national and local government to value the work and expertise of the BAVO Volunteer Centre, and for proper investment in local community volunteering and active citizenship.

BAVO chairman Mark Davies noted: "We need public bodies to recognise the challenges of the future can only be faced by working with us to build resilient communities; co-designing activities and projects that meet needs, build skills and brings communities back to life."

With a 25 per cent cut to its funding and a 90 per cent cut to voluntary youth support services in Bridgend county borough, BAVO has developed closer working relationships with the ABMU Health Board, South Wales Police and Crime Commissioners Office on projects around health and wellbeing and diversionary activities, so that some voluntary youth clubs can remain open in targeted areas and offer good support to local young people.

Acclaimed youth theatre brings the magic of 'West Side Story' to Porthcawl

Taking a break during rehearsals are (left to right): Jack Davies (Riff); Olivia Hopper (Maria); James Evan Jones (Tony); Meredith Lewis (Anita) and Lewis Scott (Bernardo).

by PHILIP IRWIN

AFTER a string of stunning musical shows – last year Jekyll and Hyde, and the year before Phantom of the Opera – the Bridgend Youth Theatre (BYT) is bringing West Side Story to Porthcawl's Grand Pavilion in February.

As the Sondheim/Bernstein classic features great songs, sharp wit, tragedy and high energy dancing, it's a fair bet that the show could play to full houses.

In many ways, the updated Romeo and Juliet story, set in New York with the Sharks and the Jets as the antagonists, is just as relevant today as it ever was.

The show will be directed by Roger Burnell, with Naiomi Pearl Roberts as assistant director.

The musical director is Nathan Jones, and the choreographers will be Andy Burnett, Naiomi Pearl Roberts and Meredith Lewis.

The GEM dropped into a rehearsal as the young cast were working on the show's dance routines, which range from salsa to ballet.

A string of quality actors have found their feet with the BYT – Aneurin Barnard, Amy Morgan, Katie-Elin Salt to name just three, and next stop for some of this cast should be some of the major colleges of music and drama.

Performances: Open dress rehearsal Wednesday, February 17, 7.30pm, Thursday, February 18. 7.30pm, Friday, February 19, 2,30pm and 7.30pm.

Schoolchildren get free online 'eyesight tests'

RADICAL new online vision screening software is being provided free of charge to all schools in Maesteg, following a study revealing that millions of UK children under the age of 12 have never had an eye test.

The three-minute screening test, developed by optometrists and vision scientists at City University London, has been shown to detect the most common eye problems among children and will be available nationwide from this week.

Through funding by Specsavers, the software, which has been designed to be operated by teachers and other school staff or volunteers, is being made available at no cost to all 27,000 primary and secondary schools in the UK.

Following the test, the software automatically generates reports for parents or guardians to help them make informed decisions about their child's eyes.

Traders collect awards

THE winners of the Bridgend town window and stall dressing competition have been announced.

Shops: Wales Air Ambulance, Adare Street; T and H Morris Butchers, Dunraven Place; Soul Hair Salon,Wyndham Street; Porters Estate Agents, Nolton Street.

Rhiw Market stalls: Daffodil Gifts; Peter Wood Butchers.

Special Out of Town Award: West House Pub.

Presentations will be made by the Mayor of Bridgend town, Coun David White, at 8pm on Monday, December 21 at the Town Council Chamber, Carnegie House, Wyndham Street, Bridgend.

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FOOD HYGIENE RATING 3

How a Taibach musician became a Scottish soldier

The orchestra early in WW1 at Aberdeen. Private Jones is in middle row, fifth from left.

GEM readers may remember that back in September, Porthcawl Museum told the story of how they had been given a mystery donation – a military cornet belonging to a Taibach man who was killed in WWI.

Private Rees Jones was born in 1881, and was killed in action on September 20, 1917, fighting with the 4th Gordon Highlanders.

The mystery was, of course, how a Taibach man had found himself part of a Scottish regiment.

His great-nephew, Bryn Jones visited the museum to make the donation, accompanied by Mr Jones' grand-daughter, Carla.

David Swidenbank of the museum said: "We are not sure why Rees, who was born near Port Talbot, would find himself in the Gordon Highlanders – or why the regiment were recruiting in Cardiff. He was a musician, so perhaps this had a bearing.

"What we do know is that Rees Jones was enlisted into the Gordon Highlanders in Cardiff on October 13, 1904."

Mr Swidenbank told The GEM: "We have been in touch with the Gordon Highlanders Museum, and they have supplied the following information:

Thank you for your enquiry regarding 9543 Private/Musician Rees Jones, who served in various battalions of The Gordon Highlanders before his death in action on 20:9:1917.

The Regular BNs and indeed many of the Volunteer/Territorial BNs of the Highland Regiments of the British Army had two bands in each BN.

They had a Pipes and Drums Band, always referred to in the Gordons as the "Drums and Pipes" and they had a military band.

The military band was made up of brass, woodwind, percussion and drum sections, and during the service years of Pte Rees Jones, the 2nd Gordons also had a string section for orchestral engagements. A cornet was one of the instruments in the military band

Before he enlisted into The Gordon Highlanders, Rees had been a well-known cornetist. The regiment was always noted for the high standard of its military bands.

It is known that Rees especially chose to enlist into the Gordons as at the time they were regarded as having the best military orchestra. The regiment was well known.

During the years Rees was in India the Drums and Pipes of 2nd Gordons was 50 strong, with 40 musicians in the military band. Apparently while in India his professionalism as a cornetist was held in such high regard he was invited on one occasion to play for the Emir of Afghanistan.

The Gordon Highlanders did not recruit in Wales, but one or two Welshmen have been known to serve in it over the years of its existence. Pte Rees Jones may have been the rare Welshman during his time in India.

With 2nd Gordons at Peshawar in 1906, his comrades included 911 Scots, 143 English ("English" was also the term used to classify those residing or born there of Scottish parentage or ancestry), which this number would have included some soldiers in this category, and 24 Irish.

The information confirms that Private Rees Jones was an accomplished musician, and it does appear that he went out of his way to join what was established as the best military band in the British Army.

Mince pies, mulled wine, and a festive quiz!

FOLLOWING a warm welcome to the December afternoon meeting of Coychurch WI, by the president Sandra Davidson, the Williams Memorial Hall looked very welcoming with tasty snacks, mince pies and mulled wine adorning the decorated tables; and also with stalls promoting their Christmas products.

After the business of the meeting a two-part fun, Christmas-themed quiz followed, with the winning team comprising Sheila Carr, Janet James, Marion Lewis, Hilary Locke, Thelma Taylor and Natalie Whitet.

The meeting on January 2 will also commence at 1.30pm with a fish/chicken and chips luncheon.

We will then revert to our usual time of 7.30pm for the meeting on February 6 (first Tuesday of the month) in the Williams Memorial Hall, Coychurch.

JANET JAMES

Townswomen's Guild has busy Christmas schedule

PORTHCAWL Townswomen's Guild has been having a busy time, enjoying Christmas festivities.

Many members joined the Inner Wheel Club on a coach trip to Gloucester Christmas market and we had our usual pretty tree in the tree festival organised by Freda with help from Dee.

We have enjoyed two Christmas lunches – one with the federation in Cardiff and our own at the Bridgend Catering College. A car load of members attended the national TG carol service in Bristol, thanks to driver John Richardson.

Our Christmas fayre was a success and a cheque will be presented in January to the British Lung Foundation.

Our December meeting took the usual form of a good tea, and entertainment again this year from the Gilgal hand bell ringers. We enjoyed joining in with the carols!

Our next meeting will be on January 13 at 2pm in All Saints Church Hall when our ever-welcome presenter, David Anderson, will be taking us on an Alpine outing.

We wish you all a very happy Christmas and please make a resolution to visit our friendly guild in 2016 (telephone 01656 772157).

Dorothy Thomas

READERS' LETTERS

Syria vote: *the catch 22 dilemma*

THE outcome of the vote over the bombing of Syria at Westminster means we have a satisfied Prime Minister who was terrified and desperate not to lose a second vote over military action.

Buoyed up by an excessively-biased right wing media, obsessed with continually castigating Jeremy Corbyn on his 'pacifist' opinions, and the so-called split in the Labour Party – it would appear to be entirely possible for some Tories to share these 'pacifist' views, provided the outcome of the voting was never in doubt!

Not one newspaper had the grace to point out the dilemma facing any opposition leader withy a catch 22 situation of free/whip voting.

Ten hours or so of debate resulted in only two speeches being worthy of acclaim – that is, according to press reports on Thursday – one by John Baron, a Conservative backbencher who voted against bombing, and one by Hilary Benn, Labour Shadow cabinet member, voting for.

Very little was given to the PM's statement, "to vote against bombing were the actions of terrorist sympathisers".

Following the Commons' vote, we were informed by the Secretary of State for Defence, Michael Fallon, that the might of the RAF (two Tornado and four Typhoon jets) would be complementing the 65-plus Russian, and many more American'French aircraft in the region – thus enhancing Great Britain's standing in the world!

We will be active in bombing oil wells in Syria and Iraq. Are we to assume that this has not been happening over the past four years?

It is worth pointing out that with all the hype lavished on Westminster, less interest was devoted to the by-election in Oldham, where, for the first time since 2010, the Labour Party increased its share of the vote to the detriment of other parties.

As we are now in the Advent season of peace and goodwill to all, and as a Christian country we look forward to celebrating Christ's birth, it would appear that someone else with the initials JC must be doing something right.

CM James, Barry

'Please support the Marie Curie Daffodil appeal'

AS a Marie Curie Nurse, I have the privilege of caring for people living with a terminal illness in their own homes across south west Wales as well as supporting their loved ones at a very difficult time.

I see first-hand how vital this care and support is in allowing families to make the most of the time they have together.

To enable me and other nurses to continue providing this care, I would like to ask readers to volunteer for Marie Curie's Great Daffodil Appeal this February and March. The appeal is the charity's biggest annual fundraising campaign, which has been running for 30 years and has raised more than £73 million since 1986.

Just a small amount of time volunteering to collect donations for the appeal will help Marie Curie Nurses to continue to provide care and support for people living with a terminal illness, so they can spend more time with their loved ones.

All readers need to do is spend a couple of hours encouraging people to 'get behind the daffodil', by giving a donation and wearing a daffodil pin.

To join the local team of volunteers this February and March, just contact Marie Curie in south west Wales by phoning 01554 759 071, emailing westwalesfundraising@mariecurie.org.uk or signing up online at mariecurie.org.uk/get-involved/daffodil-appeal/next-appeal

Thank you for your support,

Andrea Rees,
Marie Curie Nurse

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Local councillor thanks the neuro unit for his care

Unit manager Fiona Cosovic with Des and Barbara Thomas and health care support worker Marion Edwards.

Bridgend councillor David Sage returned to the unit to say 'thank you'.

FORMER patients have returned to Neath Port Talbot Hospital's neuro rehabilitation unit to say a seasonal thank-you to the staff who cared for them.

They were the guests of honour at a special Christmas party organised by staff at the unit which offers a specialist regional service to patients who have suffered traumatic and acquired brain illnesses from all over south and west Wales.

The dedicated team, which laid on festive food, music and raffle prizes, describe the party as one of their annual highlights.

Unit manager Fiona Cosovic said: "This is one of our favourite events of the year. As well as seeing us, it is a chance for patients, who often shared rooms and experiences, to see each other again.

"Sometimes it is difficult for people to come back here but we all appreciate being able to see the them again and the improvements they have made – it definitely brings a tear to the eye."

Barbara Thomas, of Cymmer, who attended the event with her husband Des, said: "I am walking proof of the work that they do here."

She was treated at the unit as part of her recovery following a bleed on the brain in 2012.

"When I came here I was in a coma, I couldn't do anything, I couldn't talk, eat or drink, but I walked out of here – actually I was like a child running along the corridor."

Another former patient, Ron Bufton, who had travelled from Llandrindod Wells to be reunited with staff, said: "When I was here I thought I was never getting out, but there is life beyond the unit and I'm happy to be able to come back to see them."

Other guests included David Sage who was treated for a clot on the brain but has now recovered enough to be able to return to his duties as a Bridgend borough councillor one day a week.

He said: "I am testament to the treatment that the health board provides – from the chairman down. I couldn't have asked for better care."

Bridgend Bridge Club results

THE Western Area Mixed Pairs Championship took place recently and congratulations go to Norma and David Newman, who came third less than a percentage point behind the winners in a very tight competition.

In the event held in Tumble, Vida Halford and Glyn Williams were not that far behind in fourth place.

The results for recent events are: Wednesday, December 9:

1st Vida Halford and Glyn Williams; 2nd Rob Forman and Alan Heath; 3rd Liam Sheridan and John Beard.

Winners on handicap, Rob Forman and Alan Heath.

Thursday, December 10:

1st Leila O'Hagan and Stuart Davies; 2nd Frances Heslin and Dee Finch; 3rd Mike Williams and John Henson.

Winners on handicap Frances Heslin and Dee Finch.

Friday, December 11 - Club Mixed Pairs Championship

1st. Jenny Vaughan and Tony Disley

2nd. Norma and David Newman

3rd. Vida Halford and Glyn Williams

Regular Club nights take place on Wednesday and Friday evenings at Nolton Church Hall. Play is scheduled to start at 7pm, so it helps if players arrive at least 10 minutes early.

On Thursday afternoons 2pm, also at Nolton Church Hall, there is a Gentle Duplicate session. Master points are now awarded but it remains a relaxed occasion where players enjoy their Bridge.

TG

LALESTON MAN (68) DIED IN A48 CRASH

THE South Wales Police are appealing for information after a man died in a collision between two vehicles on the A48, Bridgend, on Sunday (December 13).

He was named as Christopher Furniss, aged 68, from Laleston.

His family have paid tribute to him, saying, 'he was a loving husband, father and grandfather, who will be sadly missed by all his family and friends'.

Mr Furniss died when the blue Citroen he was driving was in collision with a yellow Seat. He was pronounced deceased at the scene by paramedics.

Officers investigating the incident are continuing their appeal for witnesses to the incident which happened shortly before 1pm.

The yellow Seat was travelling from Laleston in the direction of Broadlands, when it collided with the blue Citroën that was exiting from Laleston Lane.

The 21-year-old male driver of the Seat was arrested, but has since been released on police bail.

*Anyone who may have witnessed the collision, or who was travelling along the A48 around the time of the incident, should contact South Wales Police on 101, or Crimestoppers free and anonymously, on 0800 555 111, quoting reference number *459555.*

Harry at Porthcawl with Simon Elms at the helm.

The Welsh milestone in Harry's epic RNLI journey

HARRY MASCALL, an eight-year old lifeboat enthusiast, and one of the RNLI's youngest and biggest supporters, has visited stations in Wales – on his mission to visit every single lifeboat station in the UK – and raise funds and awareness for the charity.

Harry has now visited 93 stations so far, and is almost at his Big-100 mark! Having covered all of the stations in Wales, he has reached a significant milestone.

At Porthcawl, Harry witnessed a major event in lifeboat history as he was introduced to Aileen Jones, the first woman to receive an RNLI bravery medal. The Porthcawl lifeboat station houses an Atlantic 85 lifeboat – it was the first time Harry had ever seen one.

At Port Talbot, Dean and George stayed at the station until 9pm on a cold, rainy night to meet Harry, and show him how to tie all different kinds of knots. They also showed him how the radio on the boat works.

Harry said: "The Welsh stations have been fantastic! Everyone has been so nice to me, and I'm so grateful to everyone who helped to make my Welsh visit a real memorable experience."

To show support and sponsor Harry in his mission to visit every station in the UK, please visit his just giving page www.justgiving.com/harrymascall/

After the Syria vote...

IT WAS ALL DOWNHILL FROM THERE!

WESTMINSTER NOTEBOOK

Bridgend MP MADELEINE MOON is writing an exclusive report from Westminster for GEM readers.

LAST week was hectic following two debates on the Middle East – the second debate culminating in the vote on Syria.

I had asked the Secretary of State for Defence a number of questions about the UK's access to Tornado planes, pilots and navigators but had no answer.

I was highly sceptical about the 70,000 Syrian opposition fighters when the number of Taliban we had fought in Afghanistan over 14 years was unknown. I voted No.

It was wonderful to then come home and plunge into visits around the community with my scientist shadow, Dr Theo Tryfonas. Theo lectures at Bristol University, but lives in Cardiff and is a specialist in cyber defence, hence his pairing with me as part of an initiative to provide understanding of the two worlds of science and Parliament.

Theo joined me at Porthcawl Comprehensive to listen to the sixth formers' questions about Syria, referenda and Russia.

We moved on to Cynffig Comprehensive to meet pupils who had won a string of national competitions on issues ranging from safe internet banking, to drinking and driving.

From schools, we moved on to visit two local businesses nominated in the Bridgend Business Awards. They were a perfect contrast to each other but only a street apart in Bridgend. Daydream Education, not a name you may know, is one of the leading providers of educational wall charts in the UK and exports around the world.

If you need a chart about punctuation, mathematical prime numbers, or how the data protection act works, they are go-to people.

Next, it was Avia Motors, who specialise in bodywork on classic cars. They also have an American-themed diner which is great fun.

Finally, it was Tesco where we joined in the collection for the Foodbank. The generosity of people was wonderful to see.

The Foodbank volunteers work so hard ensuring food is available and reaches families in need. A huge thank you to those who gave and to the volunteers who work so hard to ensure local people do not go hungry.

Saturday was mostly spent in church. In the morning I was in St Mary's Nolton, judging the Christmas tree competition, then in the afternoon in All Saints' Porthcawl, again looking at at Christmas trees. The evening was back in St Mary's for a wonderful concert and awarding of prizes for the trees. I have judged the competition for nine years and it is the highlight of my Christmas.

Each year entries get better and better and in the ingenuity and creativity, knows no bounds.

It was back to All Saints' on Sunday for the candlelight carol service organised by Porthcawl's hard working cancer research support group; a moving and special event.

It was when I went home that things started to go wrong: the goblins who steal contact lenses were waiting for me. As I took one lens out, they grabbed it and ran. Despite a semi-blind fingertip search of the bathroom floor, shaking out clothes, towels, it was gone. The plug was in the sink (I've lost one that way before) there was no finding it. I went to bed unhappy.

Monday brought a be-spectacled breakfast with Rotary before heading home to collect the remaining lens to take to the optician and arrange for a replacement. A friend called by the house and offered to take the lens into town for me.

Great. So I put the light on to pack my bag and a bulb burst. I found the ladder, went to replace the bulb – and water came out of the ceiling!

The train ticket was cancelled; my staff, defence committee staff and the whips were advised I was not on my way to London and I began ringing around plumbers. One offered to come at the end of January.

Fortunately, Ben could come late afternoon, so I settled down to plough my way through the emails and booked a ticked for Tuesday morning. Ben found the problem but needed to come back later in the week to fully resolve it.

Tuesday started well then went downhill. I missed the 9am London train by seconds (traffic jam and a missed turning en route to the station) was soaked in a downpour heading for the 10am, and travelled to London with wet feet. Once in London, I missed a vote (again by seconds) and began to wonder what else could go wrong.

Wednesday morning started well. I had a day full of chairing meetings. My neighbour rang to say my burglar alarm had gone off and the police were there. I rang my friend Ruth and she and her husband went to check and yes the trip switch, not liking the water in the electrics, had caused the problem.

Thursday's debates were mentally cancelled; I needed to sort out the plumbing. All of this organised by texting; then on to chairing meetings and a struggle between needing my glasses on to see people giving evidence, and needing them off to read and make notes.

Wednesday afternoon brought the Tenovus choir from Bridgend to the Commons to perform in Portcullis House. They were wonderful, singing with such verve and love of the music. MPs heading home for the night stopped to listen.

All was fine until the choir packed up, ready to catch the bus at 9pm back to Wales. The bus was picking them up in the lay-by outside of Portcullis House; except as we went outside we saw the road was closed and watched as the bus headed off across Westminster Bridge, unable to stop.

It all ended well in the end. After 40 minutes on Westminster Bridge, the exhausted and very cold choir members were finally able to board the bus which had been driving around London trying to get back and find them. A night we will all remember.

Today is Friday. My plumbing crisis is sorted but I'm not out of the woods yet. I have a new contact lens and the electrician comes Monday to fit new a new light fitting as the old one is water damaged.

I just hope it's not another week like the Flanders and Swann song The Gas Man Cometh. Google it and laugh.

Annual tea tradition honours the seaside town's oldest residents

Photographs by MALCOLM NUGENT

THE annual Jenkin Henry Tea is put on for the 20 oldest Porthcawl residents who were born in town, and was set up by the late Jenkin Henry as a bequest.

Today the tradition continues and it is provided by the current Mayor, Coun David Newton-Williams.

Ceri Joseph from Porthcawl Museum, gave an audio visual presentation during the afternoon, which revealed some interesting and fascinating facts about the development of Porthcawl, the town, harbour and industrial development in the past.

The event this year was especially interesting as the guests were joined by Mr Peter Henry, a direct descendant of the late Jenkin Henry, who gave an indication of the activities and life of his forbears.

The Mayor and Consort presented a gift and commemorative certificate to each of the guests.

Guest list: Mr Peter Henry (descendant of the late Jenkin Henry), Mrs Mair Harrhy (oldest guest) Miss Cecile Jones, Mrs Sarah Morgan, Mrs Joan Hughes, Mrs Josephine Burrell, Mrs Eileen Evans, Mrs Mary Evans, Mrs Valerie Thomas, Mrs Sylvia Thomas, Mrs Pat Roberts, Mrs Julia Morris, Mrs Rose Power, Mr David Kingdom, Mrs Jeane Rees, Mrs Rona Suter, Mrs Carol Payne, Mr Dennis Power, Mrs Brenda Bentley, Mrs Ruth Davies.

MN

CHARITIES BENEFIT AT COFFEE MORNING

Photographs by MIKE WILCOCK

NFU Mutual Bridgend & The Vale Agency recently held a Christmas coffee morning in aid of Macmillan and Tenovus.

Agents David Harris and Julian Kelly welcomed NFU customers, friends and also people who work in and around Bridgend Business Centre. Nearly £400 was raised from donations for the delicious cakes provided, cards sold and raffle won. Pam Harris the organiser would like to thank all those who supported the coffee morning, especially all those who come regularly to the coffee mornings in the agency.

Scott Bell, standing, with Dai Harris.

Abi Reader.

Local entrepreneurs are through to Test Town national final

Bridgend Town Mayor Coun David White, Mayoress Jaqueline White, joint winners of Test Town Bridgend Geraint Robson and Caitlyn Corless of Ddraig Valley Farm Park and Simon Allen of Fy Siop Fferm, with Ruth Rowe of Bridgend College.

TWO fledgling companies from Bridgend county borough have made it through to the final of a national enterprise competition where they will compete for the chance to win £10,000 to develop their business ideas.

More than 30 enthusiastic young entrepreneurs aged 16-30 from across south Wales, recently took part in the Welsh heat of Carnegie UK Trust's 'Test Town 2015' contest, where a pop-up enterprise market was set up in Bridgend town centre.

There were two joint winners of the Bridgend heat - Simon Allen, for his work towards setting up Fy Siop Fferm as an enterprise offering local farm products, and Geraint Robson and Caitllyn Corless, who are developing Ddraig Valley Park Farm as an educational visitor centre with animals.

ABOVE: Rhys Young is named Test Town Bridgend's runner-up with his fitness and nutrition business.

The runner-up was Rhys Young with Korefitt, a Bridgend-based business offering a range of fitness and nutrition products.

Following a successful bid by Bridgend College and Bridgend County Borough Council, Bridgend town centre was selected as only one of ten locations in the UK and the only one in Wales to host the regional heats of Test Town 2015.

Cabinet member for regeneration and economic development, Coun Charles Smith, said: "Test Town has become one of the UK's largest entrepreneurial competitions, giving budding young entrepreneurs a valuable insight into running their own business and we were thrilled to have been the only town in Wales to be selected to host this round of the competition.

"It was great to see young entrepreneurs from Bridgend county displaying their ideas in Bridgend town centre, and we are over the moon to have local contestants going through to this year's final, which will be held in Scotland in February."

Since winning the Bridgend round, the joint winners, Ddraig Valley and Fy Siop Fferm, are exploring the idea of teaming up to strengthen their business model.

Simon Allen, of Fy Siop Fferm, said: "I feel that Test Town was a massive benefit for myself and Fy Siop Fferm as even from the Bridgend town centre event I found its opened lots of doors. For example, all the links and amazing entrepreneurs I met at the market and teaming up with Ddraig Valley.

"I think the best part of the event so far was interacting with the public and getting their opinions. I think the plan is to have a sit down with Ddraig Valley and the team to work out the best way forward and how to hit Scotland bigger and better for the final."

Geraint Robson, of Ddraig Valley, added: "At first we were hesitant about entering Test Town as we weren't sure how we would be able to present the Ddraig Valley brand, but after coming up with a couple of ideas we got excited for the competition and for people to see a few of the animals that would be at the farm park.

"The best part of Test Town was the public's reactions. Some were petrified of snakes while others were inquisitive of the snails – it was brilliant to see people react so openly.

"When we won, we were in utter shock. We were not expecting to win at all and to win in conjunction with someone we consider a friend and someone who we can both benefit from partnering up with was a fantastic feeling!"

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Bridgend's Tenovus Cancer Care choir wins Commons vote!

ON December 9, Bridgend's Tenovus Cancer Care Choir performed an informal concert in Parliament for an audience of MPs and Peers, led by Ruth Morris their conductor.

Madeleine Moon MP for Bridgend invited the choir to raise awareness of the services that Tenovus provide to families affected by cancer in Wales.

Sing With Us, the charity's community choir project, offers an opportunity to people who have suffered from, or been bereaved by cancer to meet people with similar experiences in a relaxed and welcoming setting.

Ms Moon reported: "On Wednesday evening, the House of Commons, so often a solemn and imposing place, resonated with the joyful voices of Bridgend's Tenovus choir. MPs took time from their hectic schedules to hear a range of songs from the choir's repertoire.

"Alongside tear-jerkers and Christmas favourites, there were choral renditions of classic hits and pieces composed specifically for the choir. I was particularly captivated by their stunning version of O Holy Night.

"The audience was moved and inspired by the energy and enthusiasm with which the choir performed. Following the performance, the Minister for Europe David Lidington MP congratulated the choir for an enthralling performance.

"As an experienced singer himself, David described the excitement and anticipation he felt before every chorus. After a demanding week of parliamentary business, I left the concert feeling relaxed, with my spirits lifted and a smile on my face.

"Before the performance, members of the choir enjoyed a tour of Parliament and had the opportunity to observe a debate in the Commons chamber. They were shown around Westminster Hall, the spectacular Norman centre of the Palace, and taken down to the ornate undercroft chapel beneath its floors.

"The late arrival of the bus to take the choir home provided some additional drama. The choir and I ended the day on Westminster Bridge desperately trying to locate the bus that had got snarled up in the London traffic!"

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Residents collect their MAD awards for 'fantastic community spirit'

ABOVE: Alex Edwards of Contour Showers (left) and Kathy Smart (right) present Cwrt Anghorfa Gardening Club with the Eco Champion award.

Martin Baldwin of CJS Electrical (third from left) and Kathy Smart, chair of the board of WWH (right) presents the Community Project award to members of The Squirrel's Nest.

A GROUP of Bridgend residents have been recognised for the "positive impact" they have made on the community by landlord Wales & West Housing at its annual 'Making a Difference' awards.

The Squirrel's Nest scooped the Community Project award, sponsored by CJS Electrical, for their outstanding efforts in helping others by creating the first working 'Men's Shed' in Wales.

The Men's Shed movement started in Australia to provide a place for men to socialise, do something practical and talk about issues. Inspired by the movement, the group from Bridgend – including a resident of WWH – came together to form The Squirrel's Nest.

The group meets daily at a rented industrial unit in Tondu to socialise and discuss problems, whilst using skills in woodwork to produce anything from pens and bowls to clocks and Christmas ornaments, which are sold, and the funds re-invested into the project.

The group has also developed a strong link with Prostate Cancer UK, with Friday sessions specifically for men who have been affected by the condition – giving them the opportunity to support each other.

Robert Vintainer from The Squirrel's Nest said: "I'm very pleased! It's nice to be appreciated. Organisations like Wales & West Housing help us to do these things."

Gardening club residents from Cwrt Anghorfa retirement scheme in Pyle scooped the Eco Champion award, sponsored by Contour Showers, for creating and transforming a thriving community garden.

From a bare and unused grass area, the grounds are now filled with flowers and a variety of fruit and vegetables – which are shared out amongst residents to make healthy meals. Other features include a wheelchair-friendly patio area so those less able-bodied can also make the most of the grounds.

The residents raise money to keep the garden going with events and a donation box, and thanks to the hard work of the group, the wellbeing of many living at Cwrt Anghorfa has been hugely improved.

Residents from Western Court in Bridgend were finalists in the Community Project award for their summer house project, whilst Rhian Stenner from Kenfig Hill in Bridgend was also recognised in the Fresh Start category, sponsored by Anwyl Construction.

Rhian, who has a nine-year-old child, wanted to support her brother who was going through a difficult time, so adopted his three children so they could stay together as a family.

Anne Hinchey, chief executive of Wales & West Housing, said: "Now in their eighth year, the MAD Awards are our way of recognising the strength, selflessness and community spirit of our residents. To see the continued success of our Bridgend residents at these awards, showing such fantastic displays of community spirit, is amazing."

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'Great to see resource for people often overlooked'

New STARS centre opens in Bridgend

RECENTLY, Bridgend AM and First Minister Carwyn Jones officially opened the Skills, Training, Assessment, Resource and Services (STARS) social enterprise centre in Bridgend.

Located at Tempest House on the Brackla industrial estate, STARS has been formed from two organisations that support people with learning disabilities and mental health issues in Bridgend – Cartrefi Cymru and Homestyle.

Mr Jones said: "I was delighted to formally open the STARS centre. It is great to see an additional resource such as this being set up in our community for those people who are often overlooked in our society.

"This will really make a difference and for many it will give them a sense of purpose, a reason to get up in the morning. This could be a lifeline to many who perhaps are unable to fill their days with any meaningful activities.

"As well as providing help and advice, the STARS centre will produce items for sale and during my visit, it was great to see some of these products being made and to see some of the items for sale including cards, bags and jewellery.

"Providing work opportunities alongside social opportunities will not only raise the confidence levels of the people who are able to access these opportunities, but also provide much-needed revenue for the centre," he added.

Jill Nicholson from Cartrefi Cymru said: "Cartrefi Cymru and Homestyle Care were pleased to welcome First Minister Carwyn Jones to open our new STARS Community Interest Company. STARS has come about as a result of Cartrefi Cymru and Homestyle Care working in partnership to develop a new resource for the Bridgend community.

"Our aim is to provide a resource for people to gain the skills that they will need to live more independently and to move into paid or voluntary employment.

"STARS will produce items for sale, and be a hub for advice and assistance for people in the area, providing both work and social opportunities and quality, valued day activities for people with learning disabilities and/or mental health issues."

Tilly collects AM's festive design prize

LAST Friday, Bridgend AM Carwyn Jones paid a surprise visit to the winner of his Christmas card competition – four-year-old Tilly Bourke from Trelales School.

During school assembly, Mr Jones who is also First Minister, presented Tilly with a framed copy of her winning design, a gift card for £25 and a signed card. The design will be made up as Mr Jones' official Christmas card.

Mr Jones said: "It was great to meet Tilly and to congratulate her on winning my Christmas card competition. Tilly's card was bright, creative and vibrant. She should feel very proud.

"I would also like to take this opportunity to praise all the entries that I received and to thank all the schools that took part. I thoroughly enjoyed looking at all of the designs which were very creative."

Progress on plans to replace tarmac beach

PROPOSALS for replacing the asphalt shoreline at Porthcawl's town beach with all-new sea defences have cleared the first round of Welsh Government approval.

Bridgend County Borough Council's plans will now move on to the design and development phase and the beach will see a lot of activity over the next few months as engineers test the site to establish what specific works will be necessary for introducing a new 'terraced' design which was selected following public consultation in 2013.

The current sea defences for the town beach prominently feature a large amount of asphalt which was set in place in 1984 to prevent erosion and reduce the chance of waves breaking over the top of the promenade.

It has worked for the last 30 years, but further maintenance is now required to ensure it can continue to function effectively, the council is taking the opportunity to look at introducing a fresh new design capable of standing up to the elements for the next 100 years.

Coun Hywell Williams, cabinet member for communities, said: "This is excellent news and means the council can move to the next phase of its plans for providing improved sea defences at the town beach which will be far more visually pleasing, while also hardy enough to protect the Esplanade and stand up to the tough maritime conditions.

"The final design of the defences was chosen in partnership with local residents as part of the public consultation, so I am sure that they will be pleased to hear that the plans have moved a step closer."

Beware this council tax refund 'scam'!

BRIDGEND county borough residents are being warned to look out for a scam which claims they are owed a refund on their council tax payments.

Several local residents have contacted Bridgend County Borough Council after they received telephone calls from scammers saying that they are entitled to hundreds or even thousands of pounds.

The hoaxers go on to ask for confidential bank account details in order to arrange for the rebate to be paid. Householders who fall victim to the scam subsequently find that their bank accounts have been raided.

Coun Mike Gregory, the cabinet member for resources, said: "The council will never phone you out of the blue to ask for your bank account details over the telephone. This is a scam that has also done the rounds in previous years and we're urging residents not to provide any bank details to these fraudsters."

Bridgend's Trading Standards service has also received similar complaints in recent months, where residents have been told they can obtain rebates on water, gas and electricity payments, in return for an upfront payment. The advice to residents is to avoid, wherever possible, giving bank details or card numbers over the phone, especially if the call came out of the blue.

Residents who may have already given their account details over the phone are advised to contact their banks as soon as possible.

If you believe you've received a similar call, please contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 03454 040506 (for a service in the Welsh language call 03454 040505) or email tradingstandards@bridgend.gov.uk.

Scams can also be reported to South Wales Police via the 101 non-emergency number.

Local mother retrains for a new career

A PENCOED mother of two, Helen Davies, feels her career has only just begun, even though she's in her 50s and got her first job more than 30 years ago.

After raising a family, she went through a series of lower-skilled, temporary and part-time jobs. It was only after being supported by an employer to take a business studies degree in her 40s that things finally clicked into place for her.

Now, at the age of 50, she has landed a challenging role as commercial business development manager for Engage Training at Bridgend College and is looking forward to another 20 years of working life. Helen is one of a growing number of older workers in Wales who are revamping their skills in order to extend their working lives. Forecasts say by 2020, a third of Wales' working age population will be aged over 50.

The Welsh Government is now urging employers to invest in their older employees' skills, both for the individual's wellbeing and for the benefit of their businesses.

Research shows employers need to hold onto the skills and experience of older staff both in order to be competitive and avoid a huge threatened shortage of workers in the next decade.

Based on UK figures, it is predicted, unless more people stay at work in their 50s and 60s, Wales could face a shortfall of nearly 300,000 in the number of people available to fill vacancies generated by new job creation and natural replacement requirements by 2022.

Helen had been unable to find full-time work following her time away from industry and due to a perceived lack of qualifications.

However, she joined the administration staff of Bridgend College, working in a succession of temporary jobs and showing a keen interest in business.

The College recognised Helen's potential and invested in her skills, funding her to attend a HNC course, then a HND and finally a BA Honours in Business Studies, where she gained a 2:1 last year. This enabled her to become the college's commercial business development manager.

Helen commented: "The training I have received has been invaluable and given me a new lease of working life and driven my career in a completely new direction. I went from working part-time in a garden centre, not evening knowing what Windows was, to having a degree with over 90 per cent in Excel training and managing my own division. Work was always 'just a job' for me, but now I have a real career.

"I absolutely love my work and am so grateful that the college was willing to invest in my skills at an older age to give me this opportunity. Thanks to this, I can see myself working for at least another 20 years – well into my 70s – and I feel like, in that time, I will learn more and achieve more than I have done in my entire working life so far."

For more information on the Welsh Government's campaign to retain and train older workers, visit: https://business.wales.gov.uk/skillsgateway/age-investment.

Helen Davies.

Year ends with a party!

THE December meeting of Newton WI was opened with the usual WI business and we were all sorry to hear that our friend and long time member, Joyce Pritchard had passed away in November, Joyce was a great character and will be sadly missed.

The carol service followed and was officiated by Rev Colin Richards – a lovely service with carols and readings. The meeting ended with refreshments.

Anita Jeffrey was presented with the annual Competition Cup, to much applause. The Christmas tree festival at All Saints Church was outstanding. We thank our craft ladies for all their hard work in the preparation of our tree.

The Glamorgan WI federation carol festival, held at the Brangwyn Hall was a wonderful occasion, enjoyed by all. The choir and soloists were in fine voice.

Our Christmas party went with a swing, lovely food, great company. The entertainment was provided by two very talented young dancers, Mia Dobbs and Olivia Lester, who performed a fabulous selection of ballroom dances. **MF**

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Cardiff Airport's interim boss is now confirmed as new managing director

CARDIFF Airport has announced the appointment of Debra Barber as managing director and chief operating officer, responsible for directing and controlling operations and optimising a sustainable Airport for Wales.

Debra Barber pictured outside the terminal building.

In this role, Ms Barber will lead the airport team in managing the business and will oversee the development and delivery of the airport's business plan.

Ms Barber has been in post as interim managing director since September 2014 having joined Cardiff Airport as operations director in May 2012, following a successful career with the Royal Air Force.

Having joined the military in 1984, she spent the first 10 years working in and around RAF airfields as an air traffic controller before retiring as Group Captain and Air Traffic Management Force Commander, responsible for all RAF air traffic units in the UK and around the world after 28 years' service.

During her time as interim managing director ,the airport has seen a significant growth in passenger numbers, a new airline base, new services and successful delivery of major events, plus further improvements to the terminal and airfield operations.

Commenting on her appointment, Debra Barber said: "I am extremely pleased to continue leading the airport during this exciting stage. We have achieved a great amount already but recognise there is still much work to be done to ensure we have an airport we can all be proud of.

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ROTARY AND INNER WHEEL BRING SOME FESTIVE CHEER

Rotarians, Inner Wheel members and friends with Orchard House residents.

THE Rotary and Inner Wheel Clubs of Barry visited Orchard House residential home on Tuesday, December 8, to give the residents some festive cheer and Rotary Club president Paul Halstead introduced everyone to carols, readings, and poems.

Hark the Herald Angels Sing and other carols were interspersed with scripture readings by Inner Wheel president Tina Evans and Rotary president Paul Halstead. Inner Wheel members Carys Howe and Beth Longley also made interesting contributions.

Residents were particularly appreciative of teenagers Katie Brownjohn and her friend Miriam, who played their flutes.

A special guest helper was nine-year-old Bailey Sloan, who offered chocolates to the residents during the evening's entertainment! At the end of the evening Rotary president Paul thanked all attending and particularly Rotarian Meirion Evans for organising the event and playing the piano. He then wished everyone a Happy Christmas!

The Rotary Club of Barry meets weekly in the Glenbrook on Thursdays (6.30pm). For further information, speak to secretary Phil Hunt on 01446 720000, or look online at www.ribi.org. **JO**

'Don't feel alone at Christmas'

AS Samaritans Cymru gears up for the festive season, the charity is reminding people that no-one needs to feel alone this Christmas.

"f you are struggling to cope with life, the pressure to have a good time can magnify your challenges and increase your sense of isolation, even with friends and family around you," says executive director for Wales, Sarah Stone.

"This is why Samaritans' volunteers in Wales will be there around the clock for anyone who feels they need to talk, in confidence, about whatever's getting to them – on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day, and every other day of the year.

"Someone contacts Samaritans every six seconds. Problems don't go away just because it's Christmas, so if you're finding it hard to look forward to the festive season, we're here for you.

" If it's too difficult to open up to friends or family, or you feel you have no-one who will listen, talk to us. We'll keep whatever you say safe, we won't judge and we'll help you find a way through."

Gemma is a Samaritans' volunteer in Bridgend who has answered hundreds of calls for help from people finding Christmas and New Year an ordeal:

"It may be your first Christmas without your children because of a separation. Or you may be bereaved, or struggling with redundancy, debt, your health, relationships or family issues.

"It's OK to not be having a good time, and you don't have to put on a brave face for us. You can talk to us, by phone, email, or face-to-face in our branch.

"However difficult your thoughts and feelings are, knowing that we care and that we will listen can make all the difference," Gemma added.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cowbridge Country Market

THE market wishes all its friends and supporters a happy Christmas.

We are open on Friday and Tuesday, December 18 and 22 for you to stock up on last minute delights. A full range of produce and craft items will be available on both days in the Lesser Hall, 9.30am – 11.30am. Empty jam jars are welcome, ahead of our marmalade making in January.

Boxing Day swim

WHITMORE Bay Voluntary Lifeguards' annual Boxing Day swim meets at the Voluntary Lifeguard Station, Western Shelter, Barry Island, entering the water at 10am.

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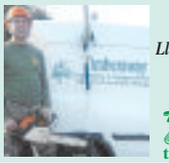

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TY HAFAN LOTTERY DRAW WINNERS

THE following are winning numbers in the Ty Hafan Crackerjackpot lottery draw number D909.

- **£2,000:** 144745.
- **The rollover, which now stands at £3,000 was not won this week.**
- **£10:** 198635, 822865, 233885, 474955, 644562, 796200, 105640, 205787, 109540, 622896, 180755, 617948, 687683, 850689, 629840, 619605, 905448, 962147, 1166.
- **£5:** 193568, 799756, 169131, 751842, 386099, 959938, 261435, 410368, 616669, 179773, 422201, 278558, 894631, 211627, 466723, 895564, 545651, 311066, 784782, 696343, 186849, 536022, 113730, 884631, 796366, 893418, 523652, 787872, 477008, 244327, 350258, 362119, 838636, 467925, 481713, 444953, 114414, 305317, 562463, 429726, 778191, 761425, 516436, 267945, 404086, 437152, 950466, 327057, 638915, 110877, 516494, 702069, 122395, 445616, 578328, 328, 503, 284, 1651.

The GEM cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions contained in the above.

For lottery information please telephone 029 2053 2300.

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Check the advertisement on this page for our new classes starting in January.

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See you in January!

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MOYA'S PUPILS EXCEL IN BALLET EXAMINATIONS

THE Moya Vahey School of Russian classical ballet, based in BIJOU, Cowbridge, recently had ballet examinations with pupils from Penarth, Porthcawl, Pencoed, Llantwit Major and the Vale participating.

The results were excellent with 12 dancers achieving Honours and eight Honours with Distinction.

Four 16-year-olds, Alice Teague, Rachel Bent, Isaac St John Griffiths and Llewelyn Brown, all had over 90 marks for the advanced exam.

The examiner, Andrew Stevens from Ljubljana, Slovenia was very impressed with the high standard of work and invited Llewelyn to dance the Prince in his production of *Cinderella*.

Alice Teague, Rachel Bent and Llewelyn Brown (pictured) are through to the final of the Dance World Cup 2016, to be held in Jersey next June.

"We are very proud of them and wish them very good luck," said Moya.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pantomime in Cowbridge

FAME Factory Spotlight will be performing the pantomine *Beauty and the Beast* on Friday, December 18 at Cowbridge town hall at 6.30pm.

Tickets are £5 each, available from the town hall office or David Barnes Drycleaning on Cowbridge High Street.

Ward councillors' surgery

THE Labour Vale and Town Councillors for Buttrills and Court Wards, Bronwen Brooks, Pamela Drake, Jeff Evans and Stuart Egan will hold their regular advice surgery on Saturday, December 19 from 10am – 11am in the small community room of Barry Library, King Square. No appointment necessary.

Penny Farthing's £100,000 facelift

RIGHT: Tracy Griffiths, manager at the Penny Farthing.

FORMERLY Farthings, the newly re-branded Penny Farthing cafe and wine bar, which was bought by family-run hospitality group Town & Country 18 months ago, has been given a £100,000 facelift.

It has invested in a new wine bar, cake fridge, flooring, chairs and fixtures and fittings to update its look as it expands its offering.

Previously only open in the daytime, to coincide with its new extensive wine list, which includes over 50 wines from all over the world, Penny Farthing has extended its opening hours and is now open Thursday to Saturday until 11pm.

Alongside a new daytime menu, a special menu of small and sharing plates has been created for the evening.

The 80-cover café and wine bar has taken on an additional five staff to support its growth plans and has put together a calendar of events in the lead up to Christmas, which will be developed further in 2016.

Christmas services

BARRY'S Methodist church services will take place as follows this Christmas: Cadoxton Christingle, December 18 at 3.15pm. On December 20, at 6pm carols.

Crossway (Court Road/Crossways Street) on December 20 at 3.30pm, a service of readings, carols and messy church Christingle; on Christmas Day at 10am.

St David's Winston Road/Colcot Road December 20 at 6pm a service of lessons and carols by candlelight; on Christmas Eve, service with Holy Communion at 11pm, and on Christmas Day at 9.45am. The Gathering Place, St Athan on December 20 at 10.30am a Christingle; Christmas Day service at 10am.

Barry Uniting Church (The Waterfront) December 20 at 10.30am and 6pm, carol services; also at BUC a Christingle at 4pm on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day at 10am.

For more details, contact the Vale of Glamorgan Methodist circuit on 01446 406262.

FAMILIES in Llantrisant recently enjoyed a magical breakfast where they were joined by popular characters Elsa, Anna and Olaf at Leekes (above).

Festivities began as the characters broke the ice, performing songs inspired from the well-known film and after being invited to dress up as their favourite character, a lucky recipient received a prize for the best costume.

Peter Mundell, store manager at Leekes Llantrisant said: "It's the first time that we've hosted an event of this kind and we're delighted that so many families turned up to enjoy breakfast with Elsa, Anna and Olaf.

"The children really enjoyed the interaction with the characters, along with the singing and various competitions.

"It also provided the perfect opportunity for their parents to finish those last minute Christmas preparations with our three for two mix and match on a superb selection of gifts as well as our great range of decorations and kitchen accessories."

BOOK REVIEWS

Book for railway buffs

RAILWAY buffs will enjoy Geoff and Ian Body's *The Galloping Sausage and Other Train Curiosities* (Published by The History Press at £14.99).

The formative years of Britain's railway network produced a host of ideas, activities and characters, quite a few which now seem not only highly unusual, but sometimes little short of ridiculous.

Weird schemes and designs, extravagant behaviour, reckless competition and larger than life characters all featured in the genuine struggle of the railway system to evolve.

This book, by ex-railwaymen Geoff and Ian Body, captures more than 150 entertaining snippets, stories, and strange and unusual facts from an ample supply of railway curiosities.

Geoff Body worked in the railway industry from 1945 to 1976 and has been writing on the subject of railways ever since.

His other titles include *Railway Oddities* and *Signal Box Coming Up, Sir!*

Ian Body is Geoff's son and is also an ex-railwayman. He joined forces with his father to produce *The Galloping Sausage*.

Children's book debut

ANGELA FISH is a writer who specialises in intergenerational communication, women's writing and Welsh writing in English.

She gained her M.Phil in literature at the University of Glamorgan in 1995, and was a principal lecturer there until 2000.

Her publications include non-fiction, fiction, short stories and poetry, often with Welsh and feminist themes.

Ben and the Spider Gate (published in hardback by Book Guild Publishing at £12.99) is her first book for children.

The 'hero' Ben loves chatting to his wise Gran, playing computer games with his best friend Jess, and helping his dad to train his clever dog, Scoot.

Best of all, though, he likes playing ball in his garden with Scoot and it is the garden and local woods where this enchanting story unfolds.

Illustrated with some beautiful black and white drawings, it is the kind of book you will enjoy reading to your young children or grandchildren.

BRIAN LEE

CHRISTMAS FETE

TY DEWI SANT Residential Home in Myrtle Close, Penarth, CF64 3NQ is holding a Christmas fete this Saturday, December 19, at 2pm.

Stalls include bric-a-brac, books, handmade gifts, cakes and a raffle.

Trip By The Sea with Jolie-Pitt and Pitt is stylish but dull...

by GARETH JAMIESON
Follow Screen Talk on Twitter – @GEMScreenTalk

NEITHER Brad Pitt nor Angelina Jolie were scraping around in their careers when they got together in 2005 after meeting on the set of action comedy *Mr and Mrs Smith*.

Since then their individual stock has risen considerably, the former hitting a run of critical and box office successes (including an Oscar nomination for *Moneyball*), while the latter has balanced her acting career with a move behind the camera which yielded the lauded *Unbroken*.

Now the couple have teamed up, with Jolie not only behind the camera, but also writing the script, in *By The Sea*. Set in France during the mid-1970s, Vanessa (Jolie), a former dancer, and her husband Roland (Pitt), an American writer, travel the country together.

They seem to be growing apart, but when they reach a quiet, seaside town they find themselves reconnecting as they meet the locals...

The inherent thrill of seeing a real-life couple on the screen doesn't always bring the fireworks you would hope for (just look at Nicole Kidman and Tom Cruise in *Eyes Wide Shut* for example); so while placing the coupling of Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie-Pitt together holds some voyeuristic thrill (is this what they're like when they argue?), it's pretty much the only thrill in a caustic yet all too cumbersome story of a marriage unravelling.

Neither Roland nor Vanessa are particularly easy to like characters – he is a writer who's struggling to overcome writer's block and a penchant for alcohol, while she is seemingly constantly walking under a dark cloud, popping pills and passing the time away.

The trip they embark upon is more professional than personal – Roland is hoping to have his creativity sparked by the area – but as he struggles to put pen to paper, the troubles in their marriage bubble to the surface even more, their lack of communication and relationship painfully evident.

It isn't helped that the pair find themselves in the shadow of a newly-married couple in the room next door, their blooming love and passion a stark counterpoint to Roland and Vanessa's icy relationship.

While the performances are all more than competent, the story meanders lazily; it doesn't ever feel like it's kicking up a gear, even as the two couples become friendly and the reasons for the apathy between Roland and Vanessa slowly come into view, keeping you intrigued until the very end, where everything comes to a head in an emotional explosion.

Both Pitt and Jolie-Pitt are unsurprisingly strong, enlivening the stuttering material while Melanie Laurent and Melivil Poupaud as the seemingly picture-perfect counterpoint to them also deliver good performances.

As a director, Jolie-Pitt shows yet more evidence that she has some serious burgeoning talent behind the camera, giving the film a classy and elegant tone, riffing on the visual sophistication of European cinema and making the most of the gorgeous, scenic location, the languid direction fitting nicely.

Yet the screenplay is the disappointing element, Pitt-Jolie's script indulging in the characters and their journey a little too much without ever really offering any great substance. There is the intriguing element of the pair snooping on their next door neighbours through a spy-hole but it's all too pedestrian and one-note, and ultimately slightly predictable.

You never feel wholly engaged by either story or characters, and while *By The Sea* is gorgeous to look at (the leads alone ensuring that, let alone the beautiful location), it's an altogether dull affair.

VERDICT – A cumbersome exercise in style, *By The Sea* feels a little too self-indulgent and slow-paced to ever truly capture your attention. The performances are sound, the direction is stylish but lazily paced, but the story feels overly predictable and moves in familiar ways. It looks great, but there's little more to it than that. Poor.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED: ***A Good Year* (2006), *Rabbit Hole* (2010).**

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It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

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Cloudy2Clear service the Vale, Bridgend, RCT and Porthcawl areas and Phil is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. *'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'*

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The bells of St John's ring out to celebrate its illumination

AFTER an absence of several years, the floodlights at St John's Church, Newton, have been switched on again and a celebration was held in the Ancient Briton to mark the event.

The Newton Brownies started the evening by singing Christmas carols and a selection of Brownies songs, with actions!

There followed an evening of carols, mulled wine, mince pies and a raffle. Matthew Warren brought his keyboard to accompany the singing and members of the church choir lent their voices to leading it.

The raffle was drawn during the evening and the bells of St John's were rung to complete the celebrations.

The Ancient Briton was packed out with members of the local community who gathered to support the project. It really was a community effort.

Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) repaired the lights and switched them on in the afternoon.

Funds were raised through the medium of social media.

Word spread quickly with offers of help flooding in, including raffle prizes, cakes and donations.

A collecting bottle was placed on the bar and soon filled up. As a result, the target cost of £400 to illuminate the church has been achieved.

It is an example of how a community will pull together to support a local project and the evening at the Ancient Briton celebrated this.

Grateful thanks go to everyone who supported it, either by donations, raffle prizes or by attending on the night and buying raffle tickets.

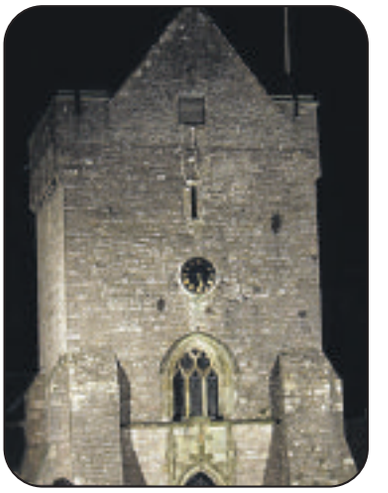
There is likely to be a surplus, after paying for the work and meeting the cost of electricity, which the community will keep for next year and look to further improve the Christmas lighting in the village.

If anyone has any suggestions, post comments via Facebook or leave them in the Ancient Briton. The floodlights will remain on during the Christmas period until January 7, and are set from 4pm to 12.30am.

Special thanks must go to Kristina and Andrew from the Ancient Briton for organising the fundraising and hosting the celebration evening – it may become a fixture in the calendar!

Report by Andrew Singer

The Brownies singing in the Ancient Briton.



The church will be lit up until January 7.

Black bag collection change

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The council is to carry out a public consultation over the changes. Another possible change is for a nappy recycling service to be introduced.

Coun Hywel Williams, the cabinet member for communities, said: "As a county borough, we have always performed really well when it comes to recycling, and in 2012-13 we recycled 57 per cent of all waste when the target was 52 per cent.

"But the statutory targets are getting higher and more demanding, and in its current form, the kerbside collection scheme will not be enough to meet them unless we make some changes.

"At the moment our target is 58 per cent, but this will increase to 64 per cent in 2019-20, then 70 per cent by 2024-25. Many local authorities in Wales have already made changes as areas that do not meet the new targets will be subject to severe financial penalties.

"For example, missing the 64 per cent target by just one per cent will mean that BCBC will be issued with a penalty of around £100,000 – which will have to be paid for by local taxpayers.

"The more we miss the target by, the more we will have to pay, so the only way in which we are going to be able to avoid huge fines is by changing the way we collect refuse.

"It makes sense to consult on these changes now as our current waste collection contract is due to expire on March 31, 2017, and we need to ensure that we have a service in place from this date which is able to meet the new targets. "

Any scheme selected will need to begin in April 2017. Recycling will remain on a weekly basis. As part of the consultation process, the council will be looking at what new waste equipment householders will need.

Council Leader Mel Nott added: "A great deal of work has been carried out to look at the current system and like a lot of local authorities, it is clear that our biggest problem lies with black bags.

"With this in mind, the consultation is asking people to give their views on specific proposals that have been identified to tackle this.

"They include options for implementing a nappy recycling scheme and providing households with new equipment while continuing to collect recycling on a weekly basis.

"We understand that changing how black bags are collected may not be popular, but unfortunately this is an issue that cannot be ignored and tough decisions need to be made."

The three proposals that the council is consulting on are as follows:

Proposal one (black bags)

Option one: Two week collections restricted to two black bags. Under this option, refuse collections will remain fortnightly, but households will only be able to put two bags out for collection. This is something that Monmouth County Council has already done with a 63 per cent recycling rate recorded for 2013-14.

Option two: Three week collections restricted to three black bags. Similar options have already been introduced in areas such as Gwynedd.

Option three: Four week collections with unrestricted black bags. Fife County Council recently trialled a four-weekly collection and research suggests that this option would be the best method for achieving a 70 per cent recycling rate as households will recycle more waste.

Proposal two (a nappy recycling service).

This proposal would introduce a nappy recycling service to coincide with a reduction in how often black bags are collected, and is intended to support families and residents who use absorbent hygiene products.

Proposal three (recycling black bag waste at household waste amenity sites).

This proposal would see changes made at household waste amenity sites so that some would become community recycling centres where all items that can be recycled will need to be removed from black bags brought to the site, while others may cater purely for recyclable materials and will not process black bags.

A similar change has already been introduced in Rhondda Cynon Taff where their sites are recording recycling rates in excess of 90 per cent.

More information about the consultation is available at www.bridgend.gov.uk/consultation. It will run until February 8 2016, and can be filled in online or you can pick up a copy at your local library.

For more information, call the Consultation team on (01656) 643664 or email consultation@bridgend.gov.uk.

Alternative formats are available on request and you can also write to Communications, Marketing and Engagement, Bridgend County Borough Council, Ravens Court, Wing 3, Brewery Lane, Bridgend CF31 4AP.

Go to the The GEM for the latest stories and breaking news...
www.bridgend-today.co.uk
www.porthcawl-today.co.uk

Study puts high value on county's tree bank

A NEW study has found that trees in urban areas of Bridgend county borough provide around £800,000 worth of benefits to local residents – all year round!

Focusing on trees in Bridgend, Maesteg, Pencoed, Pyle and Porthcawl, the 12-month 'i-Tree Eco Project' measured the impact that urban trees make in reducing flooding, regulating temperature and filtering air pollution.

Carried out by BCBC and Natural Resources Wales, the scientific survey found that local trees slow down around 124 million litres of water during heavy rain each year, which is equivalent to an estimated £161,525 in sewerage charges.

Trees also clean our air by removing an estimated 61 tonnes of airborne pollutants every 12 months, saving more than £179,000 in damage costs while helping to reduce asthma and heart disease.

But the biggest contribution they make is the amount of carbon they remove from our atmosphere, helping to tackle climate change. Bridgend county borough's 'urban forest' removes around 2,080 tonnes of carbon each year, estimated to be worth £457,000.

Trees also provide habitats for wildlife, while they cool down towns during warm weather, provide both sound and visual screening, and act as windbreaks. Based on its value as a visual amenity alone, it is estimated that Bridgend county borough's 'urban forest'would cost a staggering £142 million to replace!

The study found that Bridgend county borough's urban forest contains 439,000 trees which cover 12 per cent of urban land – slightly under the average for Wales.

With a further 27 per cent of local urban land identified as being suitable for planting trees and shrubs, there is plenty of opportunity to do more.

Dafydd Fryer, Natural Resources Wales' urban forest architect, said: "Over a two-year period, we've been undertaking studies in Bridgend and Wrexham County Boroughs, plus Swansea and the Tawe catchment, with the data captured and analysed by experts in Forest Research.

"In Bridgend county borough, the trees were mainly found in parks, on residential land and across vacant land. There are 60 different types of tree and shrub species, but with a low proportion of large trees.

"It is these large stature, long-lived trees that offer the most benefits to society, with the study recommending that, where practical, more of these tree species be planted and carefully managed to maturity."

St Donat's Chorale signs off in the capital

ST DONAT'S CHORALE (*pictured, left, during rehearsals*), have been invited to give their final concert of the year at St Edward's Church in Roath, Cardiff, on Saturday (December 19) at 11am.

They will be performing at the church Christmas fayre with a mixture of songs and carols, both new and old, which everyone will be able to sing along with.

Rehearsals will recommence on January 4, at Atlantic College in St Donat's at 7.30pm, when anybody who enjoys singing will be made very welcome; no auditions necessary.

The choir will be rehearsing for their next performance on March 19 when, accompanied by professional soloists and orchestra, they will be singing *The St John's Passion* at All Saints Church, Barry.

'PAY FOR A DAY OF HOSPICE CARE'

INDIVIDUALS and businesses are being encouraged to help support local people living with a terminal illness by paying for 24 hours of hospice care on a day of their choice.

The Pay for a Day fundraising initiative allows donors to pay for the £6,660 cost of running the Marie Curie Cardiff and the Vale hospice in Penarth for a single day.

In exchange, individuals or companies can pay a visit to the hospice to see how their donation is used to support local people, and their families, while a certificate of support bearing the donor's name will also be on display in the hospice reception area.

Individuals and companies supporting the Pay for a Day initiative will also see their names and stories featured on the charity's website and social media channels.

The Marie Curie Cardiff and the Vale hospice cares for more than 1,200 people, and their families and loved ones, every year. Among those to have witnessed the expert care and support offered at the Marie Curie Cardiff and the Vale hospice is Richard Gladwin, whose mother Joan Patricia Gladwin was cared for at the hospice in 2005 after being diagnosed with lung cancer.

Richard said: "The care that my mother received at the end of her life at the Marie Curie hospice made a terrible time bearable, not just for my mother, but my whole family.

"From the moment she arrived, things got better for us. The expert palliative care of the doctors brought physical relief, the compassion and skill of the nursing staff brought both physical and mental comfort, and the work of the volunteers raised our spirits. I owe them a debt that I can never repay.

"As special as my experience was, to me it is not unique – it happens to many, many families and Marie Curie is there for them day in, day out. I support the Marie Curie Cardiff and the Vale hospice so that others can get the help that my mother did and have a better quality of life for as long as possible. I urge others to do the same by supporting Pay for a Day."

Georgina Burke, Community Fundraiser at the Marie Curie Cardiff and the Vale Hospice, said: "The Marie Curie Hospice, Cardiff and the Vale, is here for people living with any terminal illness, and their families. Some of the people we care for and support stay at the hospice, while others come in for the day to attend our clinics or support sessions.

"We are able to do this thanks to our fantastic supporters, including the individuals and organisations that choose to Pay for a Day. There are lots of ways to get involved: You could make a one-off donation. Get your staff involved in fundraising. Or raise the money through a sponsored cycle, run or other personal challenge."

To find out more about how you can Pay for a Day and support the Marie Curie Cardiff and the Vale hospice, please contact Georgina Burke on 02920 426068 or email Georgina.burke@mariecurie.org.uk.

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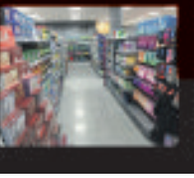

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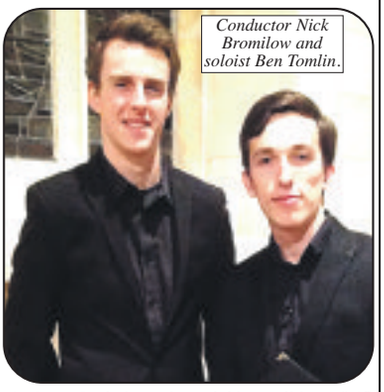
The visiting mayors at the concert.

Cor Bro Ogwr's rousing 'Music for Christmas'

Accompanist Glenn Crooks.



Conductor Nick Bromilow and soloist Ben Tomlin.

IN spite of rain and wind, and a slightly depleted choir due to the seasonal bugs, Cor Bro Ogwr gave a rousing and heartwarming concert in All Saints' Church.

The programme of Mozart, Holst, Vaughan Williams, and some familiar Welsh carols, proved very popular with the audience.

Bridgend town Mayor's consort, Mrs Jacqueline White, said how moved she was by the choir's final piece, which was 'Anfonaf Angel', by Robat Arwyn, commissioned especially for Bryn Terfel. We may not have sounded quite like him, but...!

Bass soloist Ben Tomlin joined the choir again and his rendition of 'O Holy Night' had us all rapt. We were privileged to have a 'glittering' front row listening to us; our president Carwyn Jones, finding time from his busy schedule, Porthcawl and Bridgend town Mayors, deputies and Bridgend borough county Mayor. We are grateful to receive their support.

At the end of this year, we must express our gratitude to our conductor, Nick Bromilow, calm and patient at all times, and our modest accompanist Glenn Crooks, without whom our rehearsals and concerts would not be the same. See website: cor-bro-ogwr.com.

Dominique Spearey

Sker WI group enjoys a Christmas social evening

ON December 10, president Nora Williams welcomed 45 Sker WI members to the final meeting of 2015 when the business section of the meeting discussed the Christmas fair held in Trinity Church.

Despite the very inclement weather, the fair had been well attended and had proved to be a useful fundraiser.

Sker WI sends thanks to all those who support both our spring and Christmas fairs, and the committee also thanks those members who had given up their time to help on the day.

A day trip to Llanelly House was also discussed, and members who had taken part all agreed that it had been a worthwhile and enjoyable trip.

On December 7, three members had joined the WI choir at the Brangwyn Hall, Swansea, to take part in what was reported to be a fantastic Christmas concert.

Once the business section of the meeting was over, members began the serious business of enjoying themselves!

Many members had arrived in fancy dress and a colourful assortment of elves and Santas, pink ladies and Christmas witches sat down to a fish and chip supper, mince pies and tea or coffee.

The prize for best fancy dress went to Nora Williams and the overall competition winner for 2015 was Brenda Mahoney with 43 points.

The evening featured quizzes, games, poems and readings.

Unique renditions of the 12 Days Of Christmas and *Cinderella*, presented by the committee and other members, were met with laughter and applause and the evening closed with the singing of traditional Christmas carols.

During the next meeting, members will be asked to vote to select the new resolution for National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI) campaigns for 2016. There are eight varied resolutions to choose from, such as appropriate care for people with dementia, first aid to save lives, and avoiding food waste to address food poverty.

All members are requested to make themselves familiar with the resolutions before the next meeting. This will be held at St David's Church hall at 7pm on Thursday, January 14.

The speaker Mrs Sylvia Scarf's topic will be 'My Life'. The competition will be an unusual/obscure item in white. Visitors welcome.

CHRISTINE BEYNON

YOUR CHANCE TO SHARE THE COMMUNITY NEWS...

NORTH BRIDGEND NEWS

A message for all readers in the north of Bridgend who would like to have items included in the community news columns of The GEM:

If you wish to submit reports on any social activity in this region, please contact me.

I am very approachable and will endeavour to include every newsworthy subject.

Contact details: CLIVE MITCHELL
1 Tyn-Y-Coed Close, Sarn, Bridgend CF32 9NQ
TEL: 01656 725399
email: tynycoed1@yahoo.co.uk

In the WI wonderland!

MEMBERS were delighted to enter the Aberkenfig and District Women's Institute equivalent to a winter wonderland for their Christmas party.

The hard work transforming the Len Arthur centre for the annual Christmas party was down to the committee and supporters, fortified on several bags of Aberkenfig chips!

President Eunice Williams welcomed the members to the December meeting and festive afternoon, where there was sad news for all. Gillian William's husband, Norman, passed away on a recent Australian visit and Sondra Parry's husband is back in hospital. Gillian has also had a fire in her basement.

There will be a memorial for Norman at 3.45pm on January 14 in the crematorium. Gillian sent her thanks for kind messages of sympathy. She is hoping to catch up with members in the New Year.

Happy Birthday was sung to Ethel Rudge, Paddy Bailey, Gillian Williams and Dee Melton. The Aberkenfig and District WI Christmas tree was put up in Tondu Methodist Church in time for the carol service and the Christmas bazaar.

Special thanks were given to Hilary Crocombe's husband, Keith, who once again has done members proud, printing the 2016 programmes.

The visit by Tondu primary school Christmas choir last month was a hit with members – and also with the children who appreciated the refreshments provided!

As usual, the Christmas party was enjoyed by all. Once again, members were lucky to have Pat Lewis's daughter Joanne and her squeezebox to accompany the traditional carol singing and everyone had a lovely time.

Aberkenfig and District WI meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 2pm in the Len Evans Centre, Heol Persondy, Aberkenfig. Visitors and new members are always made welcome.

The next meeting will be on January 13. There will be no speaker, but a lot of business and a vote on the possible new resolutions. The competition will be 'a doll or bear' and subscriptions will be collected.

For further information, call Dilys on 01656 725399, visit www.cobwebs.com and/or www.facebook.com/Aberkenfigwomensinstitute

Young singers

THE Welsh Young Singer of the Year competition is organised by Maesteg Gleemen male choir and sponsored by Dunraven Windows Ltd.

It is open to singers between the ages of 11 – 30 (as of September 1, 2015) studying classical singing on a full/part time basis, who meet certain criteria.

Successful applicants will be invited to attend a live, closed audition on Saturday, January 23 at Maesteg Town Hall. The final will be held at Maesteg Town Hall on Saturday, April 2.

The choir rehearses at the Royal British Legion Club, Commercial Street on Monday and Thursday evenings 7pm 8.30pm, and welcomes visitors and new members.

TunesRUs

THIS is a group that perform concerts for any charity – free of charge (just something towards expenses).

It has a number of acts including Old Tyme Music Hall, Christmas with a religious theme and Christmas partytime. Nostalgia theme, Around The World, and comedy items. It is only a small group but enjoys performing and having fun while helping a charity. Get in touch on 01656 863574.

Annual concert

WHEELS are already in motion for the Côr Meibion Maesteg ar Cylch (Maesteg and District male) choir's annual concert on Saturday, January 16 in Maesteg town hall.

The choir has an energetic social life (after most concerts there is an afterglow) and it also has a Friday club. It is prepared to perform at charity concerts or weddings.

Contact choir secretary Nigel Williams (07847 282614). Any potential chorister is always welcome.

Cefn Cribwr carols

ON December 21 Cefn Gwrydd is organising carol singing door-to-door in the village, which it has done for the last 32 years.

The village is too large for the carollers to get round everywhere in one night, so different streets are visited each year. This Christmas, it will be the turn of Green Meadow, Maes Glas, East and West Avenue.

There is room for all types of voices, even if you cannot sing come along – you can rattle a charity tin instead!

Meet on the Graig by the Christmas tree at 6.30pm for the first carol. Everyone is welcome to join in the fun. Carol sheets are provided, but take a torch!

Horeb service

AT Horeb Chapel, Nantymoel next Sunday (December 20) at 4:30pm there will be a Candy Cane carol service; a warm invitation for all. Contact Pastor Chris Bluto for details at 01443 675424.

Woodland planting

CHILDREN from seven schools in the Llynfi Valley have helped to get planting underway on the community woodland CoetirYsbryd y Llynfi, 'The Spirit of Llynfi Woodland' being created on the site of the former Coegnant colliery and Maesteg washery.

A total of 60,000 broadleaf, ornamental and fruit trees will be planted to transform the 30 hectare site. As well as creating a cleaner, greener space that people can enjoy, the new woodland is intended to tackle the risk of flooding by restricting how much water is able to flow off the site.

Church events

ON Saturday, December 19 Aberkenfig and District churches will be holding their annual Walk of Witness from Bethlehem chapel, Brynmenyn, starting at 10am to Nazareth chapel, Bryncethin.

St Bride's church, Llansantffraid holds a carol service Sunday, December 20 at 6pm to which everyone is welcome, with mulled wine and mince pies. On Christmas Eve there will be a midnight mass at 11.30pm.

St David's church, Betws welcomes everyone to the Christingle with the children from Betws primary school at 4pm. There will be a Eucharist service on Christmas day at 10am.

St John's church, Aberkenfig: Christmas Day Eucharist service at 9am; Sunday, December 27 a joint parish service to celebrate the Patronal Festival of St John the Divine at 10am.

St David's church, Wyndham: December 19 parents are encouraged to send their children to a 'Messy Church' session from 10.30am to 12.30pm; December 20 at 5pm, a 'Let's sing Christmas carols' service. Christmas Eve crib service 5pm; midnight mass at 11pm.

On Christmas Day there will be a morning service at 10.30am; December 27 a sung Eucharist at 10.30am.

St Tyfodwg's church, Glynogwr: Christmas Day service at 9am.

St Cien's church, Llangeinor: December 20 at 6pm a service with nine lessons and carols; Christmas Eve, First Mass of Christmas at 9pm; Christmas Day, a Eucharist at 8am.

St David's church, Pontycymer: Christmas Eve midnight Mass at 11.30pm; Christmas Day Eucharist at 10am.

Llynfi Valley 20 project

A REPORT by Public Health Wales states that people living in the Llynfi Valley have 20 years less healthy life expectancy compared to the rest of Bridgend county borough.

Why not go along to the Central Church, Maesteg today (December 17) from 11am – 3pm to get involved with the project?

The day will include refreshments, entertainment by St Mary's and St Patrick's Catholic Primary School choirs at 11am and Côr Merched Cwm Llynfi Choir at 2.30pm; free dementia awareness talks at 11.50am and 1.50pm; and stalls offering information – including fall prevention, substance misuse, stroke awareness, antibiotic use and information covering all of the project.

Choir function

Ogmore Valley male voice choir will be entertaining the BAVO volunteers at Coytrahen Community Centre at 2pm.

The public can hear them sing at Asda Bridgend from 10am to 12pm on December 20; they will be at the Ty Risha from 7.30pm.

Tondu Wesley Methodist Church has a Christingle service on Christmas Eve at 5.30pm; on Christmas Day there is a morning service at 10am. Everyone welcome.

• *I would like to wish all the readers of this column a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.*

Go to the **The GEM** for the latest stories and news...
www.bridgend-today.co.uk
www.porthcawl-today.co.uk

NEWS IN BRIEF

Limestone Man book launch in Porthcawl

A PERFORMANCE this Friday (December 18) of readings from *Limestone Man* (featuring voices with keyboards, played by Peter Morgan) will take place in the Green Room, SUSSED, James Street, Porthcawl from 8pm – 10pm.

Tickets £3 from SUSSED.

Farmers' Market

THE next Farmers' Market at Porthcawl is a week earlier this month, from 9.30am to 12.30pm on Saturday, December 19 at Awel y Mor Community Hall (behind the fire station).

Limited parking at the hall, and the usual producers will be there, plus a range of Christmas goodies.

This is an indoor market, so dry and warm for once!

Combined service

ON December 20 at 4.30pm Horeb Chapel, Dinam Close, Nantymoel will hold a combined 'candy cane' carol service, and a warm invitation is extended to all.

Contact Pastor Chris Bluto for details on 01443 675424.

Glamorgan GEM Season's Greetings

FESTIVE SERVICES

THE Parish of Penarth and Llandough is preparing for a variety of services over the Christmas period, including the ever-popular crib service, carols by candlelight and a service of lessons and carols.

Lessons and carols at Holy Nativity Church, Cogan, Sunday, December 20, 4.30pm, followed by mince pies and mulled wine.

Crib service at St Augustine's, December 24, 4pm families and children especially welcome (noise is not a problem!).

Carols by Candlelight at St Augustine's, December 24 at 11pm followed by Midnight Mass at 11.30pm.

Communion service for Christmas at Llandough, – 8pm at St Dochdwy's.

Family Communion on Christmas Day, 10am at Holy Nativity Church, Cogan – children are welcome to bring their toys.

New rector, Rev Mark Jones, says he is looking forward to his first Christmas in Penarth.

More information at: www.parishofpenarthandllandough.co.uk or phone the parish office on 02920 708722.

Christmas is a time to celebrate birth of Jesus

...AND REFLECT ON THE IMPORTANT THINGS OF LIFE

*'Universal message of '**peace**', and the timeless themes that remain as relevant today as they were in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago'...*

IT is at Christmastime that we celebrate the birth of Jesus, with his universal message of 'peace', and timeless themes that remain as relevant today as they were in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago.

In a turbulent modern world too often beset by hatred and strife, *'Blessed is the peacemaker'* and *'goodwill to all men'* are simple, humanitarian ideals.

As such, they have met the test of time – and should surely be shared by all men of goodwill, whatever their background or beliefs,

The seasonal break allows us a unique opportunity to spend precious extra time with loved ones and to reflect on the things that truly matter in life, the treasured values and ties that bind families (and the community as a whole) together.

It is also a time for renewal, and to share and extend wider greetings – as a year that was sadly distorted by graphic headlines recording human disasters and bitter global conflicts, slides away into the history books.

Now 2016 waits its turn in the wings to bring a more positive message of hope for a better year to come.

Finally, The GEM would like to take the opportunity to add our voice to the seasonal messages on this page.

We heartily wish all of our readers and advertisers a very happy, peaceful Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Councillor Frederick Johnson

The Mayor of the Vale of Glamorgan Council extends Seasons Greetings to all residents of the Vale of Glamorgan.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

Mae'r Cynghorydd Frederick Johnson

Faer Cyngor Bro Morgannwg, yn estyn Cyfarchion yr yl i holl drigolion y Fro.

Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda

Llantwit Major Town Council

*Councillor Mrs Patricia Lancaster, Town Mayor and all Town Councillors wish Llantwit Major residents and visitors **a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous 2016***

The Llantwit Major Conservative Branch

would like to wish local residents

a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Thanks to all who supported the party in 2015 & we look forward to your continuing support in the year ahead.

If you need support on any issue, please call us on **01446 744126**

Andrew RT Davies AM

I would like to wish constituents across the Vale of Glamorgan a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

www.AndrewRTDavies.com

If I can help you in 2016 please do not hesitate to contact me on 01446 775039 or AndrewRT.Davies@Assembly.Wales

Cllr. Richard Bertin
Independent

Wishes all residents
A Merry Christmas
& Happy New Year

For news & updates:
www.richardbertin.com
Regular surgeries held
rjbertin@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
01446 736227

Llantwit First Independent Vale Councillors

Would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year

If you're interested in joining our group, or just supporting our aims, call 01446 793669

MERRY CHRISTMAS to The Party People
from D.J. John (JB's Disco)
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Maer y Dref y Barri, Y Cynghorydd Emma Pritchard ac Aelodau'r Cyngor Tref y Barri

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FESTIVE FUN WITH 'THE INSATIABLE, INFLATABLE CANDYLION'

LOOKING for a Christmas show with a twist this year? National Theatre Wales has teamed up with Super Furry Animals frontman Gruff Rhys to create *The Insatiable, Inflatable Candylion*, a festive event that is pitched somewhere between a theatre show and a live music gig, inspired by Gruff's seminal album *Candylion* and performed in Cardiff's SWALEC Stadium.

Aberdare-born Tim Price has written the show, which will feature a mix of new songs and old favourites, all written by Gruff. And there's a cracking cast of actor/musicians, including Gruff himself, Sweet Baboo, Lisa Jen Brown (lead singer of 9Bach), Remy Beasley, Matthew Bulgo, Dyfan Dwyfor, Natasha Lewis, Dyfrig Morris, Kliph Scurlock and Emma Daman Thomas.

Audiences aged from four to 104 will be invited to meet a host of characters including Caruin, Cheffyl, Meringutan, Sledgehog, Pale Droid and all the inhabitants of Pixel Valley, where there's a whiff of revolution in the air...

This is an opportunity to see some of the best writing, singing and acting talent Wales has to offer in a unique production by the country's English language national theatre company, performed in the heart of the capital.

***The Insatiable, Inflatable Candylion* will be performed at the SWALEC Stadium, Cardiff, from December 16 to January 2.**

To book your tickets, call 029 2037 1689, or visit nationaltheatrewales.org.

A very Happy Christmas and New Year from

Jane Hutt

Labour Assembly Member for the Vale of Glamorgan

Jane.hutt@assembly.wales
www.janehutt.wales
(01446) 740981

Regular surgeries held throughout the Vale

THE VALE 150 YEARS AGO – TIMES HAVE CHANGED

by Brian Keitch

THE 1860s in the Vale was a world away from our festive season nowadays – but some things were the same.

With all the wind and rain (like this autumn) – the weather was something of a Godsend years ago – because energy was provided by the elements. Bro Morgannwg was well served by windmills.

Being near to the sea meant that grains could be ground and wool could be woven on the doorstep. Wool clothed local folk and the grains provided bread for us and fodder for livestock – and yes – roughly ground malted barley was the key ingredient in the production of ale/beer (and whisky).

Diverting watercourses went back hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Practically every parish in the Vale had a mill. Being on a fairly flat plateau of Glamorgan and with predominantly south-westerly winds led to a proliferation of windmills – especially in those communities where the water supply was changeable.

Many mills were still very much in 'action' 150 years ago. Windmills were almost abundant around our area (only Ynys Mon/Anglesey in Wales was similar, because the island was pretty flat).

From east to west – Sully had two windmills (the foundations of one is in Cog Road – the other still stands at Hayes Farm though alas – like all Vale windmills – without sails). St y Nyll tower still stands (agonisingly just outside the National Folk Museum of Wales, St Fagan's) as does that at Llantrisant.

There were three in Llantwit Major (two can still be found); Marcross had one, as did Wick (two). Another two can be found at Candleston and Nottage. These were built of stone, but some were constructed of wood. Vanished mills are still evidenced by farms names such as Windmill Farm (Boverton and City), field names such as Cae'r felin/Millfield or road names such as Windmill Lane.

However, the advent of the Industrial Revolution put paid to our mills by the 1930s. From the 1860s onwards, basic products came by rail. No longer would the woollen mills in Llanbleddian and Leckwith produce cloth for the locals. Nor the mills with flour.

But the train also brought beer... Many public houses in the Bro traditionally brewed their own 'home brew'. David Jones of Wallington, born in Llanbleddian, recalls his native village in the 1860s – when the village boasted two inns: "The General Picton and the King's Head thus – Our host John o' the Picton emulates his neighbour Shon y Gwaith as to who shall have the best tap and the competition for that honour causes each of them to add an extra bushel of malt in his brewing, to gratify the village topers.

"The thing is probably finished up with a little fighting, at least it is a portion of the standing annual gossip of the village to enquire after the event, 'Has there been any fighting?'

"The General Picton is by far the best house of the two. Close of the Church, it derives all the benefit that bell-ringing, marriages and burials can bring it as well as being the place of meeting of all parish vestries.

"But Shon y Gwaith is the oldest and down in the village must be considered the village ale-house. Shon y Gwaith name is quite a household word at Llanbleddian and popular consent has conferred his name upon the little "public" instead of the name it bears on the sign.

"If you wanted the house you might ask 20 people in the village for its whereabouts, not one of whom could at a first thought tell you anything of the King's Head, but ask for 'John the Weavers' and the youngest child that plays at the roadside will tell you Johnny is a village character."

Meanwhile, Cowbridge could claim to have over 20 inns and pubs with some three breweries to supply them. With so many drinking houses on offer, the locals had something of a reputation – as a ditty from Iolo Morganwg puts it: "For Cowbridge hath no sober man, Or none of milk sop thinkers, And no philosophical fools, but great and glorious drinkers".

Aberthin had two breweries – the Old and New; Llantwit Major had the Eagle Brewery; the King's Head and the White Lion frothed up ale for the then or so pubs that used to exist there and nearby Wick had two breweries.

The Penarth Brewery (Lovett's of poem adverts fame) opened in 1856 to quench the thirst of the navvies building the dock. Twenty years later (for a similar reason) Barry had a brewhouse too. Stiles Ales – hence Bridgend Rugby Club's 'Brewery Field' – supplied taverns widely while Pontyclun's Crown Brewery' was later to become the United Clubs' Brewery.

Even Llantriddyd had its own hostelry – 'The Prince' and near the church is the 'Brewer's Well'. Newton Nottage (another Crown Brewery) served customers in nearby Porthcawl.

With the big town breweries like Brain's, Hancock's and Ely emerging in Cardiff, these small enterprises quickly became a memory. One of the last to go was the Cowbridge Brewery. At its peak, the firm produced 100 barrels a week. By the 1950s the output was down to a mere 20 barrels. The last brew was made on May 18, 1955, under supervision of head brewer Gwyn Thomas, who had held the post for 38 years – the Cowbridge Brewery had sold out to Bass & Co.

There is a rather sad tale about one of the local dray horses of years ago recalled by locals: "At this time Dillwyn Morgan of the Bridge Brewery, Cowbridge, owned a fine trotting pony called Daisy, whose coat gleamed like satin and whose speed was a byword in the borough. She was a dray horse who delivered barrels of ale from the brewery to every corner of the Vale.

"Mr Morgan was very proud of Daisy and boasted that his pony could outrace any horse in the locality. He was challenged by a Llysworney farmer who owned a fast hunter. A private race was arranged at Penllyn, wagers were laid and an enthusiastic crowd of supporters turned up at the racecourse to cheer Daisy on. After a thrilling race she flew past the tapes ahead of her rival.

"Such a voltage of triumph surges through the jockey's body that he hadn't noticed that Daisy had begun to tremble. Within second she collapsed on the racecourse and died. The remorse of her owner was so profound that he ordered an inscribed tombstone to be placed over her in the brewery yard – a lasting testimony to her gallant 28 years."

However, after years of the demise of our local ales – a revival is taking place with the establishment of real ale microbreweries (even SA Brain & Co have started their own 'Craft Brewery' in Crawshay Street). Once again we can quaff local ale from the Vale – and maybe the local tradition of the Mari Lwyd will again trot from door to door.

Please drink responsibly. Nadolig Llawen ac wrth gwrs Ieched Da! Happy Christmas and good health!

AM calls for schools to have defibrillators

WELSH Conservative regional AM, Dr Altaf Hussain, has backed calls for all schools to have defibrillators, following the collapse of a 15-year-old boy in Colwyn Bay from a previously undiagnosed heart defect.

Josh Wheelhouse fell ill at Eirias High School in Colwyn Bay, Conwy county, and staff saved him by giving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and heart massage. The school has since bought a defibrillator.

The South Wales West AM, a former NHS consultant, said: "Emergencies of this nature can happen suddenly and can happen to anyone without warning. It is of particular concern in our schools, as young people in particular can have heart defects that go undetected until there is a critical emergency.

"The fact that staff from the school were able to provide mouth-to-mouth and CPR on the scene just illustrates the importance of first aid training – this no doubt saved the boy's life.

"Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) are easy to use and could be the best purchase a school could make. The chance of survival after the heart stops falls by around 10 per cent for every minute that passes without defibrillation, and it can take the emergency services several minutes to arrive.

"Access on site to a defibrillator really could make the difference between life and death, and I totally support Josh Wheelhouse's mother in calling for all schools to have one."

School plans new numeracy lessons

FOLLOWING a successful application to the Arts Council of Wales, Sully Primary has become a lead creative school, enabling it to explore ways of increasing numeracy standards through creative arts.

Musician Andy Everton will help create a bespoke project for pupils in year-four. He will also act as a liaison for the school, arranging for other members of the creative community to share their expertise with the learners.

The school's lead creative schools coordinator, Laura Sheldon, explained: "Being part of this scheme will help us to build the children's numeracy skills in engaging and meaningful ways, and we expect it to have a long-term impact.

"While we can't give too many details about the project at this stage, we're hoping it will involve music and science and that there'll be a big outcome!"

'Wales needs injection of new businesses'

CAN we please have a moratorium on photo-ops? Every elected official will claim they delivered to Cowbridge this vital Post Office.

Can The GEM also recognise with five months remaining, politicians will do and say anything except the real work to fix our broken economy?

Wales' GVA is 71.4 per cent of the rest of the UK, more than half the population earns less than a living wage and our education system has children's stomachs tied in knots preparing for GCSE/A-Level exams.

The Assembly election boils down to whether our children can afford to remain in Wales, or will leave to find good jobs. Instead of death by 1,000 cuts, let's build the top line of Wales, PLC by attracting new businesses.

Every elected official needs to be asked what, specifically, they will do and held to account on why after 16 years of Labour control and nearly six with Westminster's Tories, this has not been done? No more finger pointing, do something!

Denis Campbell,
Ogmore,
Liberal Democrat for The Vale.

Don't forget the lonely

IN about 10 days time, it will be Christmas Day – a time for family gathering and family fun – but let's not forget the old person down the road, who has not had a visit from anyone for many months.

Christmas is a time for family, but also a time for thinking of others less fortunate than ourselves.

David S Ball,
Swansea.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

from your local businesses and **The GEM**

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Plan your 2016 marketing through the Christmas break.
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YOUR GUIDE TO GOOD HEALTH OVER FESTIVE PERIOD

THE first item on this month's agenda is a reminder to get your flu vaccine, if you are one of the people in the at risk group.

This is available free of charge to those people, and it includes the over 65s, young children, pregnant ladies, children or adults with an underlying medical condition, like asthma or heart disease, and people who are likely to come in contact with the virus if they are working in healthcare or are indeed a carer for a vulnerable person.

GP practices are still making appointments for people, so get in touch. Some pharmacies are also now providing flu vaccines.

You can help stop the spread of flu by washing your hands regularly, and sneezing or coughing into a tissue and disposing of it straight away.

Useful information on all aspects of the flu can be found on www.nhs.uk.

As a follow on from Movember, this month it is Decembeard, where men are encouraged to grow a beard and fund raise to support the bowel cancer charities Beating Bowel Cancer and Bowel Cancer UK.

Every 15 minutes, someone is diagnosed with bowel cancer and it is the second biggest cancer killer. The mission is to get 5,000 men to raise £500,000 to help fund a range of vital services that help people with this condition.

It is fantastic that so many people are doing something positive to help. You can see the current leader board on their website www.decembeard.org. It is not too late to register and get that stubble growing! There are some great pictures on the website, including some good ideas for a festive beard.

Ask at your pharmacy or GP practice if you have any concerns about any changes in bowel habits.

The other burning issue in December is always alcohol awareness: men should ideally not drink more than 3-4 units a day and women 2-3 units a day, and there should be a minimum of two alcohol free days a week.

The over-45s are three times more likely to drink every day and 200,000 people go to work every day with a hangover: 10 million people in the UK drink a little too much, despite alcohol being the second biggest risk factor for cancer after smoking.

Advice is always available from your pharmacy about safe alcohol limits and help and support on how to cut intake. Alcohol concern is setting a challenge to adults in Wales to give up alcohol for 31 days in January.

You can sign up at www.dryjanuary.org.uk and encourage work colleagues and friends to join you.

I would also like to remind everyone to drop in a copy of your medication discharge sheet to your pharmacy every time you leave hospital, so that we can double check you get the right medicines. We can photocopy it if you only have one copy that you need to drop to your GP.

And, finally, a reminder to order any repeat medications that you need to see you through Christmas and the New Year now. If you do need to find a pharmacy over the bank holiday, a list of those providing the emergency cover is listed on the your health board's website and many pharmacies post the list on their door.

Have a happy, healthy Christmas and New Year.

KATE THOMAS Pharmacy Proprietor at Sylvia Williams Chemist, Cowbridge

Pupils at work on new film

Ms Neilson, Zak, Kieron, Tyler, Dr Coleman, Edward, Luke, Caleb, Sion and Holly Morgan (Communities First).

A GROUP of year-7 students from Barry Comprehensive School are working with Communities First and The Big Learning Company to make a short film about transition.

The students were fortunate to be able to interview Dr John Coleman OBE, a lecturer at Oxford University who has written many books about teenagers.

The boys were excited to travel to the Watershed, a digital creativity centre in Bristol, to meet Dr Coleman and had many questions to ask him.

The boys were excellent ambassadors for the school and would like to thank Dr Coleman for his help and encouragement and for answering all their questions.

Look out for the completed film in the New Year. **AC**

Young speakers excel in Young Farmers' competition

THE Glamorgan Young Farmers' Club's public speaking day on Sunday, December 6 saw members between the age of 10 and 26 take part in a range of competitions at Pendoylan Church in Wales Primary School.

The under-14 reading competition kick-started the day with teams of three reading passages from the book *Wonder,* written by R J Palacio, which was chosen by the judge for the event. Although competitors can familiarise themselves with the story, the actual passages remain unknown until 20 minutes before going on stage. Despite this being the first taste of public speaking for many of the junior members, a high standard was demonstrated throughout. Winners this year were an all-girl team from Bridgend YFC.

Meanwhile, junior public speaking had ten entries of teams made up of three members aged 16 or under taking the role of chairman, guest speaker and vote of thanks. A team from Wick YFC scooped first place while Maendy YFC member, Oliver Popham (14), won best overall speaker of the day.

Intermediate brainstrust was the competition of the day for the under 21 age group. Consisting of a three-person panel plus a chairman, each panel debated three questions on current affairs but it was Bridgend YFC that impressed the judge with their topical discussion earning them the top spot of first place.

Finally, the senior member competition aims to find the most well-rounded and experienced member in the county between the age of 21 and 26. Gower YFC Chairman, Laura Howells, was awarded first place closely followed by Maendy members Tom Rees and Kate Thomas, who received second and third places respectively.

Glamorgan YFC competitions chairman, Annie Evans, congratulated members for their performances and contribution: "Competition days like this one would not be possible without the volunteers who give up their time to train, judge and steward the teams, and for that I would like to extend my appreciation and gratitude for their commitment."

Young Farmers Club welcomes young people aged between 10 and 26 to join the diverse organisation (you don't have to be a farmer). To find out more, contact county organiser, Gwyneth Thomas, at Glamorgan@yfc-wales.org.uk or telephone 07779 331839.

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PORTHCAWL IN CHRISTMAS MOOD!

WITH Christmas just around the corner, local photographer KEITH E MORGAN, has been out and about photographing some of the festive sights and activities.

Pictured (above) are the Christmas lights that adorn the Newton roundabout.

Pictured (right) are members of the Grace Community Church, giving out Welsh cakes and talking about the real meaning of Christmas in John Street recently

Volunteers at the Tenovos charity shop getting into the festive spirit.

Gwyneth Poacher (left) welcomes Santa to his special grotto in the Sandville Self-Help Centre.

In John Street, Santa can be found in his new grotto in Porthcawl Museum.

Christmas is on the way – says robin

No bird is more associated with Christmas than robin red breast* and local photographer Sue Dobbs captured this shot of one in her garden recently.

*(*Well, apart from turkeys, obviously!)*

Free weekend parking

SHOPPERS can park for free on weekends this month in council-run car parks at Bridgend and Porthcawl.

Free weekend parking is offered in Bridgend town centre – at Brackla Street, Tremains Road, the Bowls Hall, Tondu Road and Cheapside – as well as a patch of land off Brackla Street, where the former Lorne Stewart offices stood.

The John Street and Hillsboro Place car parks in Porthcawl town centre will also be free, but charges will still apply at Rest Bay, the Halo car park at Bridgend Life Centre, and Bryngarw House and Country Park.

Call for a fresh look at the Newton flood defence plan

WELSH Conservative Regional AM Dr Altaf Hussain and Assembly candidate George Jabbour recently joined ward councillor Alun Thomas in Newton, Porthcawl, to meet local residents and discuss local flood defence which have come under threat from a new shoreline management plan.

The shoreline management plan drawn up by Bridgend County Borough Council and Natural Resources Wales has been greeted angrily by local residents. In the short-run the plan is to maintain existing defences in Newton, including a sea wall – but in 20 years' time there will be "no active intervention" and the coast will be allowed to "retreat naturally".

Dr Hussain said that he sees serious flaws with the way this decision has been reached and will be writing to the First Minister asking him to intervene. He said: "The shoreline management plan states that 30 properties, valued at a total of £3.7 million will be affected at Newton.

"The plan therefore assumes an average house price of £124,000, which seems very obviously to fall well below market values in Newton.

A low figure, of course, skews the cost benefit analysis used by NRW in Newton in favour of a decision to abandon the defences in 20 years' time.

While numbers sit coldly on a balance sheet, NRW and the council need to remember that behind the numbers sit the dreams, fears and aspirations of real people. They are concerned about how the plan impacts on their ability to obtain or extend a mortgage, and on insurance cover on their properties."

The Assembly candidate for the Bridgend constituency, George Jabbour, added: "Many of the houses on Beach Road in Newton have never been flooded.

"However, because of the new policy, these properties will be negatively affected as they will tarred by insurance providers and mortgage companies with the same brush as properties in other areas that are regularly subject to flooding.

It is crucial that the risk of flooding is explained properly."

Repair works on existing flood defences were carried out earlier this year, costing £300,000.

Get in the festive swim!

THE 51st annual Porthcawl Christmas Morning Swim will again be raising money for charity next week.

Hundreds of people will brave the waters along the picturesque Glamorgan Heritage Coast in fancy dress to raise money for charity.

This year's theme is 'pirates and parrots' – we've discovered that fancy dress helps with the anxiety of taking that first plunge!

This will be the 51st year in which the event takes place. So far, the event has raised over £70,000 for charities including The Samaritans, St John's Ambulance, Firefighters charity and Porthcawl Parkinson's Support Group. This year, the money raised will go to Porthcawl RNLI.

Swimmers can meet at the Hi Tide Inn from 10:30am to register, entering the sea at 11:45am. Or, if you can't quite face the Welsh waves this Christmas morning, you can visit the website and donate online.

It is free to take part in the Porthcawl Christmas Morning Swim; register online now: christmasswim.org/register/>.

TW

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www.bridgend-today.co.uk
www.porthcawl-today.co.uk

Councillors present £100 to Foodbank

THIS Christmas, instead of exchanging Christmas cards with fellow councillors, members of Bridgend Town Council made donations to the Bridgend Foodbank, to help purchase Christmas items for families who use the facility.

Above, the Mayor of Bridgend, Coun David White and Deputy Mayor Coun Robert Morgan, present Coun Jeff Tildesley, Chair of Bridgend Foodbank, with a cheque for £100.

Pencoed progress in the Cup – *BUT HAVE TO DIG DEEP*

ABOVE: Rhys Clarke is tap tackled. (Photos by Julie Hancock, http://juliehancock.org).

Pencoed 19 Caernarfon 5

THIS Swalec Plate round one match at the Recreation ground was closely contested throughout.

With the strong wind at their backs, the home side made most of the early running before opening the scoring. A full round of passing from the three-quarters saw centre Rhys Thomas find the supporting Tom Cross with a clever flick pass, and the full back sent left wing David Young diving over in the corner.

The Pencoed front row of skipper Kieron Moore, hooker Tom Drew, and young loose-head prop Brandon Nelson were putting the Caernarfon scrum under pressure, and were being ably supported by their second rows Dano Howells and Ricky Somers.

A half break from centre Gareth Dyer almost brought a second try, as the visitors scrambled defence did exceptionally well to keep the home side out.

Pencoed continued on the attack and following driving play from No 8 Gareth Prentice and Howells, which took play to the Caernarfon line, back-row forward Aaron Halse was held up in the act of scoring.

Halse was again in the action soon after, bursting into the visitors' 22 and sustained pressure forced a hurried clearance. Pencoed moved the ball swiftly to right wing Jack Picton, who found the looping Thomas with a neat pass and he was over in the corner. Marc Davies added a superb conversion in the conditions for the home side to lead 12-0 at the interval.

The Pencoed support at this juncture could be forgiven for wondering if this lead would be enough, as they would be playing into a now fierce second half wind.

Pencoed started the second half well however, and a run from Picton put them on the attack before another dominant Pencoed scrum (including replacement prop Christian Powell) shoved the visitors off their own ball.

Caernarfon began to use the elements and, kicking for position, were to enjoy their best period of the match, threatening the Pencoed line for the first time before both sides picked up simultaneous yellow cards.

With the offences taking place in the home 22 Caernarfon took immediate advantage, their sustained assault on the home line getting its reward with captain Gwilym Jones driven over for a well-deserved score.

Shortly after came a key moment in this pulsating tie. A sweeping attack from the visitors exposed the home defence down the left and, with only a run in required down the flank, the turbulent conditions got hold of the final pass and the ball went to ground.

The relief of the home support was tangible.

Caernarfon continued on the attack but with the clock ticking away, Pencoed could now sense a place in the second round and their defensive effort against sustained pressure from the north Wales side eventually gave them the opportunity to break away and seal the match, a well-placed kick from Rhys Clark to the visitors' line resulting in desperate defence.

When the chasing Cross was held back, match official Matthew J Thomas had no hesitation in awarding a penalty try, Davies adding the extras.

To their immense credit, Caernarfon continued to pound the home line with outside half Davies doing extremely well to check and hold up the opposition only a metre out, allowing his side to regroup and win the turnover to repel the visitors' final attack.

Match Sponsors INVACARE awarding the Pencoed man of the match to centre Rhys Thomas.

On Saturday Pencoed host visitors Builth Wells in Division One West Central at the Recreation Ground, kick-off time to be confirmed.

TR

Phoenix unluck to lose to Ynysddu

PENCOED Phoenix ran National League Division 1 league leaders Ynysddu close for most of this match, the visitors sealing their 24-10 victory in the dying minutes to also deny the home side a losing bonus point, the Phoenix effort deserving something from this match.

The visitors opened with a rather fortuitous score early in the match, a home clearance going straight into the hands of centre Ceri Bailey who raced in under the posts from 40 metres to lead 0-7.

A double hit from Kathryn Stonehouse and Amy Stevens in midfield stopped the visitors dead, before Phoenix full back Jade Mullen turned defence into attack with a kick and chase which almost brought a home score.

Sustained pressure from Phoenix saw wing Kathryn Criger held up over the line, but the home side were not to be denied with Stevens going close before ruck ball was transferred from No 8 Sophie Gunning to Zoe Reeves who put wing threequarter Lisa Hughes over in the corner.

Ynysddu returned to the attack and good defence from Mullen, Stonehouse, and Nerys Lloyd in turn kept the visitors out.

A good Phoenix scrum deep in their own 22 with the front row of Natalie O'Shea, Toni Birch, and Elleri Harris-Thomas doing well against a big visitors pack allowed outside half Rhianydd Morgan to clear her lines.

A swift counter attack from Ynysddu then increased their lead with left wing Kim Boaler showing good pace to score in the corner.

Stonehouse then did well to get back in defence to foil a dangerous visitors attack before going on the offensive supported by Katie Murphy, and Phoenix drove into the Ynysddu red zone, Stevens almost sniping over around the ruck.

Sustained pressure from the Phoenix pack with a series of pick and goes saw skipper Murphy crash over half way out for a deserved score and the interval arrived with the visitors leading 12-10.

A Morgan kick and chase early in the half put Phoenix on the attack; however Ynysddu struck with a breakaway try from around halfway from Boaler to lead 10-17.

A determined clear out from O'Shea then put Phoenix on the front foot with replacement Leanne Burnell almost breaking clear before Stevens, who was enjoying her best match at nine, broke some 35 metres into the visitors' 22 but scrambled Ynysddu defence thwarted a home score.

Unfortunately for Phoenix they were now picking up injuries up front, their reshuffled pack competing well, however with time running out Ynysddu moved the ball wide and Welsh international Megan York put right wing Hayley Davies over for a converted try to lead 24-10.

A couple of mazy runs from Burnell still gave Phoenix supporters some hope of a losing bonus point - unfortunately it was not to be.

For Ynysddu Kelly Watkins was chosen as their best forward, with Sammy Jones chosen as best back. For Phoenix several players held their hand up with strong performances, Natalie O'Shea picked as best forward with Rhianydd Morgan best back; all were choices of their opposition.

Phoenix will now take a break from league commitments and no doubt will enjoy the Christmas festivities before returning to match action at Penybanc on January 3.

Phoenix under-15 girls enjoyed probably their best performance to date in their three tries to one victory over their Bedwas counterparts.

For Phoenix tries came from Katie Carr, Ella Roberts, and Amber Carmody.

This was a good all round team performance from Phoenix, committed in defence and showing good continuity through the phases in attack.

The squad will now enjoy their Christmas break before resuming in the New Year.

Pencoed youth went down narrowly to Bridgend Athletic Youth at Newbridge Fields by 12 points to 10.

Pencoed tries came from skipper Liam Parrish, and Jacob Lloyd. On Saturday Pencoed host Mumbles Youth in the Ospreys A league.

TR

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The Mules go through to next round of Plate after victory

Tondu 6 Kenfig Hill 14

THE Waterwheelers welcomed the Mules to Pandy Park for this WRU Swalec Plate match which proved to be a close, tough encounter played in good spirit.

The Mules bolstered their starting 15 by adding some much welcome experience from forwards coach Darryl Harvey, backs coach Rhodri Clarke along with full back Matthew Tossell and fly half Nicky Giles.

From the opening whistle it was obvious that the elements would play a major part in shaping play with a strong cross wind and wet ball which made running rugby a premium.

The Mules had the better of the first half with No 8 Harvey to the forefront with some huge barnstorming drives but scoring points was proving difficult with an early exchange of penalties and a well taken snap drop goal from Nicky Giles giving the Mules the edge at 6-3.

However, just as the half was coming to an end, live wire scrum half Tom Briggs broke down the blind side with a sniping run, threw a dummy and showed good pace to score in the corner for the game's only try.

That gave the Mules an 11-3 lead at half-time.

Tondu had the wind in their favour in the second half but found the Mules defence in resolute mood and their only reward was a second penalty goal which was quickly cancelled out with a penalty from Mules centre Rhodri Clarke.

The win takes the Mules into the next round of the Plate but their next league match is an eagerly anticipated affair on Boxing Day, once again against Tondu, which should be a Christmas cracker!

DD

Connor takes 'man of the match' award in seconds derby

KENFIG HILL SECONDS 26 TONDU SECONDS 15

***RIGHT: Shaun Evans converted three of the tries in difficult conditions.* IMAGE by JOHN HYDE**

ON Saturday, December 12, Kenfig Hill seconds entertained Tondu seconds at a windy Croft Goch.

Kenfig Hill started strongly with Connor O'Connell starting in the centre having only just returned from active duty with the Royal Navy the day before.

O'Connell scored two quick tries in the first 15 minutes – juggling the ball for the second try before going over under the posts.

The Kenfig Hill pack were now in the ascendancy and took advantage from a series of driving lineouts before Dan Dryden forced his way over from a close range ruck.

Kenfig Hill then scored a fourth try from scrum half Michael Rawnson who dummied his way over in the corner. Winger Shaun Evans converted three of the tries in difficult kicking conditions to put Kenfig Hill 26-0 up.

Tondu responded well and scored a well worked try just before half-time to make the score 26-5.

Kenfig Hill made several changes in the second half which slightly disrupted their game while Tondu kept going and competed strongly in all areas of the game.

This resulted in two scores midway through the second half which weren't converted.

However, it made the last 15 minutes a tight, entertaining affair, although there were no more scores and Kenfig Hill ran out 26-15 winners.

Connor O'Connell took the man of the match award for his strong running and quick feet.

Team manager for Kenfig Hill, Gareth Russell, also deserves great credit for ensuring so many players turn up for the second every week.

DD

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Bridge results

RESULTS for the Vale of Glamorgan bridge club:

Celtic Sims competition, November 30 - 1st Liam Sheridan & John Beard 67.86%, 2nd Tony Disley & John Salisbury 66.56%, 3rd Tony Ratcliff & Julian Pottage 65.91%.

Claret Jug competition (handicapped), December 7 - 1st John Henson & Geoff Tinkler 59.94%, 2nd Christine Richmond & Hilary Morgan 59.89%, 3rd Anne Hughes & Trish Roe 59.61%.

December 14 - 1st Debbie & Simom Richards 67.86%, 2nd Tony Disley & Phil Felman 66.23%, 3rd Elaine & Alan Robins 57.79%.

LE

Old-fashioned Christmas for night in museum

Photos by David Swidenbank.

PORTHCAWL museum opened its doors on a Friday evening recently, offering visitors a glimpse of Christmasses past.
They were entertained by music and storytelling and fed with hot soup and mince pies.

Penybont under-18s put on five-star, five -goal performance!

PENYBONT under-18s earned their fourth consecutive victory with a comfortable 5-1 victory over Porthcawl in their last fixture before Christmas.

Penybont made a nervy start to the game and struggled to get going for the first 30 minutes.

Despite this Penybont looked like the side with the most quality but struggled to make the best of their opportunities.

However, it was only a matter of time before all areas of Penybont's game clicked into place.

Brothers Matthew and Robert Symons combined well for Penybont's first goal as Matthew's great build-up play gave Robert the chance to slot the ball past the home side's goalkeeper.

Penybont were now on fire, as they almost immediately doubled their lead through Matthew Symons who turned from provider to goal scorer within a minute.

Matthew was granted far too much space by Porthcawl's defence as he made them pay with a neat finish.

Penybont then scored their third goal in five minutes through Jac Lewis who met a dangerous cross from Morgan Ley to give Penybont a 3-0 lead going into half-time.

Within the first five minutes of the second half, Penybont were awarded a penalty when Morgan Ley was fouled just inside the penalty area after causing all sorts of problems for the home side's defence.

The Porthcawl goalkeeper then saved Huw Williams' penalty with a save to the right of the goal.

It was soon 4-0 when Oliver Waagenes played a perfectly weighted ball to Evan Denscombe, who smashed the ball home to give Penybont an unassailable lead.

Huw Williams then scored Penybont's fifth goal of the match on his last game for the club before joining the army.

Arran Williams and Robert Symons demonstrated some good approach play in the build up to the goal. Porthcawl finished by scoring a consolation goal which was the only blemish on a routine 5-1 victory for Penybont.

Overall, Penybont under-18s are building up some good momentum which will stand them in good stead for their games after Christmas.

Finally, I am sure everyone involved with the club will join me in wishing Huw all the best – well done! **TP**

COETY PRIMARY'S BRAVE NEW WORLD!

The new Coety Primary School.

PUPILS and teachers are celebrating the end of their first term at the new state-of-the-art Coety Primary School and are looking forward to the next stage.

Pupils were closely involved from the outset – three years ago, a team of 'Construction Ambassadors' told architects what sort of features they wanted to include.

One of the ambassadors, year-5 pupil Lily Shaw, said: "The new school is very big and it means we now have lots of space for all the new children who want to come to Coety. It was getting very cramped in our old school!

"I love the food technology room and I've already used it to make cookies as part of our science work on heat and temperature. I think we will all enjoy using it."

Coun Huw David, Bridgend County Borough Council's Deputy Leader, added: "The new building is the next exciting chapter in the long history of Coety Primary School and will provide a first-class learning environment for future generations of local children."

He added that the school's facilities will also be shared with the wider local community throughout the year.

Two rooms would be opened up for community use, while changing facilities have already been built inside the school, ready to serve new sports pitches.

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Maendy YFC members make their mark at public speaking day

Both junior public speaking teams.

MAENDY Young Farmers Club has had a busy spell recently with charity work and competitions as the focus.

Members volunteered to assist with shoe box packing and sorting for Samaritans' Purse's 'Operation Christmas Child'.

The warehouse, based at Llandow this year, saw more than 27,000 shoe boxes pass through its door for children aged between two and 15 years.

Competitions have put members to the test over the last few weeks, from stock and carcass judging to the county YFC eisteddfod and, most recently, the first of two Glamorgan YFC annual public speaking days at Pendoylan Church in Wales Primary School.

The day began with the junior reading competition for members aged 14 and under. Maendy had two teams of three entered in this competition: Maendy A consisted of Lauren David as chairman, with Kate Brown and Iestyn Maidment as readers.

Maendy B was led by chairman Evan Thomas, joined by readers Keira Ateyo-Canter and Oliver Popham.

Both teams demonstrated a high standard of reading, which resulted in Maendy B being placed second, with Evan being picked to go forward to represent Glamorgan in the Wales finals in the spring.

Junior reading team A: (left to right) Kate Brown, Iestyn Maidment and Lauren David.

Team B: (left to right) Oliver Popham, Evan Thomas and Keira Ateyo-Canter.

Next up was the junior public speaking competition for the under-16 age category. Maendy were represented by two teams; Maendy B which consisted of Hebe Thomas as chairman, Oliver Popham as guest speaker and Jenny Thomas (vote of thanks) and were placed second overall.

Maendy A was placed sixth on the day with consistent performances: the team chairman was Lauren David, Evan Thomas as the guest speaker and Iestyn Maidment (vote of thanks).

Congratulations to Oliver Popham, who was selected to represent Glamorgan in the Wales final, but also for receiving the best junior speaker award.

The audience continued to be entertained as the intermediate Brainstust competition began. Maendy's team consisted of Oliver Popham in the role of chairman with panel members Jack Thomas, George Thomas and Will Clarke alongside him.

The all-boy team debated the British monarchy, rural housing, and modern education, and were rewarded with second place.

The final competition of the day was senior member of the year, which saw past Maendy chairman, Tom Rees, being placed second, while current club chairman, Kate Thomas, was awarded third place.

Kate Thomas congratulated all members who took part and wished those chosen to represent Glamorgan at Wales level the very best of luck.

Senior member competitors, Kate Thomas and Tom Rees.

Kate added: "Public speaking is a great asset for any individual to possess, but beginning at a young age is a springboard to confidence and achievement.

"It was the first competition of its kind for some of the new junior members and they displayed great potential for the future. Thank you to Natalie Lewis, Hannah Lewis and Richard Western for training the teams."

If you're interested in joining Maendy YFC, contact club chairman, Kate Thomas, by e-mail maendy.yfc@gmail.com or telephone 07701 081218. Also visit www.maendy-yfc.com and follow @MaendyYFC on twitter or like 'MaendyYFC' on Facebook for regular updates.

PUBLIC NOTICE

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Celebrating Cefn Glas Infants' success with headteacher Sue Henderson and pupils are Coun Huw David and chair of Governors Graham Clifford (right), who were both joining in with the school's Christmas jumper day.

Cefn Glas Infants win first gold for Wales!

CEFN GLAS Infants School in Bridgend has become the first infant school in Wales to achieve the 'Investors in People Gold' accreditation for supporting, developing and motivating its staff.

Earlier this year, assessors spent time interviewing groups of staff to gather their views on working at the school, and their feedback was clear – they are being given the skills and support to help them thrive.

Assessors found that the school's culture of learning and nurturing stretches way beyond its pupils, with staff having every opportunity to develop in their careers.

The school's leadership was also praised as being 'inspirational', with 'distributed leadership at all levels' enabling the Foundation Phase to be taught effectively to the school's 225 pupils, who are aged from three to seven.

Headteacher Sue Henderson said: "Investors in People has grown to become the UK's leading accreditation to show which businesses and organisations put their staff first, so for a relatively small school in Bridgend to achieve this award, is a tremendous honour that we are all extremely proud of.

"More than 20 members of staff were interviewed as part of our assessment, and I am elated that they spoke so highly of their experience at the school. We have such a committed team here at Cefn Glas, with a burning passion to set the highest standards so that our staff and pupils can all flourish and be the best that they can possibly be."

Congratulating the school, Coun Huw David, BCBC deputy leader said: "This is a fantastic achievement and a first for Wales. The school has worked extremely hard to achieve such high standards, and the leadership of Sue Henderson is very forward thinking.

"She has created a supportive working environment, and the sense of passion and pride that staff have in working for the school is clear for all to see. The challenge now is to continue to keep up this momentum, but I have no doubt that they will be able to do that."

The news of the Investors in People Gold accreditation comes hot on the heels of the school receiving a very positive inspection report. Estyn assessors have rated the school's current performance as 'good', while its prospects for improvement are also 'good' and the school's partnership working has been judged as 'excellent'.

CLUB HANDS BOTTLE CASH TO CARERS

ON Friday, December 11 a bumper cheque, for £500 was presented by Kevin Taylor, steward at the United Services Club, Porthcawl to Pamela Hall from the Bridgend carers' centre (above).

The cheque was the result of proceeds from a charity bottle situated on the bar in the club where members and guests could donate loose change towards the charity.

The target was reached in a short space of time, mostly thanks to the club pool team, who participated in the Movember event by growing moustaches for the entire month of November.

The next charity collection will be in aid of the Porthcawl Army Cadets.

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The number of local paid-for newspapers continues to decline. Here, we keep you up to date with the...

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South Wales Echo	21,036	Paid 65p
Western Mail	20,007	Paid 80p
Glamorgan Gazette	9,094	Paid 90p
Wales on Sunday	16,060	Paid £1.50

The GEM's weekly figure includes door to door delivery and numerous popular outlets from Penarth to Porthcawl

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Public Notices

Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru Natural Resources Wales

Deddf Bywyd Gwyllt a Chefn Gwlad 1981 (fel y'i diwygiwyd)

Hysbysu Safle o Ddiddordeb Gwyddonol Arbennig o dan Adran 28 (1)

Rhoddir rhybudd trwy hyn bod Corff Adnoddau Naturiol Cymru a enwir yn Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru yn ystyried Fferm Walters yn Safle o Ddiddordeb Gwyddonol Arbennig (SoDdGA).

Y mae'r safle hwn i'r Gorllewin o Y Barri, yn syth i'r Gogledd o Croes Weycock ac i'r Gogledd-orllewin o'r A4226 yn Awdurdod Unedol Bro Morgannwg.

Mae'n ymestyn dros arwynebedd o 24.87 hectar. Canolir y safle ar Cyfeirnod Grid Cenedlaethol ST 099688.

Mae'r safle o ddiddordeb arbennig oherwydd ei glaswelltir helaeth, niwtral, llawn rhywogaethau.

O dan yr hysbysiad hwn mae'n ofynnol i bob perchennog a deiliaid hysbysu'r CNC am rai gweithrediadau arbennig a allai amharu ar ddiddordeb arbennig y safle. Gall methu â gwneud hynny fod yn gyfystyr â throsedd.

Nid yw'r hysbysiad hwn yn rhoi unrhyw hawliau mynediad i SoDdGA Fferm Walters

Gall unrhyw un sydd â diddordeb yn y tir wneud sylwadau ynghylch yr hysbysiad yn ysgrifenedig at CNC yn y cyfeiriad isod erbyn 14 Mawrth 2016.

Gellir cael manylion llawn am yr hysbysiad gan gynnwys map, disgrifiad o'r safle a rhestr o weithrediadau a allai fod yn niweidiol a datganiad o farn CNC am reoli'r tir oddi wrth:

Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru, Plas yr Afon, Parc Busnes Llaneirwg, Caerdydd, CF3 0EY

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

Notification of a Site Of Special Scientific Interest under Section 28 (1)

Notice is hereby given that the Natural Resource Body for Wales otherwise known as Natural Resources Wales considers Fferm Walters to be a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The site is located West of Barry, North of Waycock Cross and to the NW of the A4226 in the Unitary Authority of the Vale of Glamorgan.

It covers an area of 24.87 hectares, centred on National Grid Reference ST 099688.

The site is of special interest for its exceptionally large area of species-rich neutral grassland.

Under this notification there is a requirement on all owners and occupiers to notify NRW of certain operations which may damage the special interest of the site. Failure to do so may constitute an offence.

This notification does not confer any rights of access to Fferm Walters SSSI

Any person with an interest in the land may make representations regarding the notification in writing to NRW at the address below by 14 March 2016.

Full details of the notification including a map, site description and list of potentially damaging operations and a statement on NRW's views about the management of the land can be obtained from:

Natural Resources Wales, Rivers House, St Mellons Business Park, Cardiff, CF3 0EY

Public Notices

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Powerfreight Ltd of **81 Sky Peals Road, Woodford Green, IG8 9NE is applying to change an existing licence as follows:**
• To keep an extra **2** goods vehicles and **2** trailers at the operating centre at **Unit 55, Vale Business Park, Llandow, Cowbridge, CF71 7PF.** Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

Anyone believing they have a claim against the estate of the late **DAVID SMITH of 12 Clos Y Wiwer, Llantwit Major, CF61 2SG** contact executors at Jordans Solicitors Birmingham **0121 585 3900,** or the address above. **Deadline 8 weeks & 1 day from notice.**

Lost & Found

FOUND
A pair of pink glasses in gold case, around two weeks ago in Cowbridge park
01446 775985

Property

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• No upfront fees!
• Any condition!
• Stop repossession!
• Confidential!
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near Llantwit Major requires
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- Sleep-ins & waking nights required
- Full training provided

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A vacancy has become available for a
Receptionist
(Full/part time)
to work in a busy, friendly office at **The Glamorgan GEM** based in Cowbridge.
Please email Jan Irving at **jan.irving@tindlenews.co.uk** with a covering letter and CV. **Closing date December 31st.**

Birthdays

Rebecca Gill
Congratulations on your 18th Birthday on December 19, 2015
All our love, Nannie & Herbie Xxx

Articles For Sale

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Tel: 07896 983013 50

Bunk Bed
Sleeps 3, as new - £100
T 029 20 530115
(Buyer collects) 50

For sale
LCD PC monitor, 17" (4:3 ratio). As new, £15.
01446 775810. 50

2 Wardrobes
White, each 40" x 24" x 72" high. Double doors, could be disassembled /reassembled. Good condition - **£50 for the 2.**
Cash only sale, buyer to collect.
02920 514564
(Dinas Powys) 50

Sharp TV
32" Flat Screen. Good working order £40
01446 773210 51/01

B+O Music Center
Beocenter 2200 33/45 turntable, cassette player, radio, recording facility, separate speakers, full working order. **£350 cash sale.**
(Buyer to collect)
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Three Piece Suite
Very good condition, top quality. £250 ono.
(Buyer Collect)
01446 773166 51

Three Wheeler Walker
with basket, tray & brakes. Bought £70 will sell for £40 ono. Only used once in the house.
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Excellent condition. Many adjustable features. Spacious seating. Head/rear lights, side mirror horn.
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Renault Megane Scenic
2003 Diesel. New MOT.
£600 ono
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for further details 49

Family Notices

Chamberlain
Paul Anthony

Suddenly, on December 8, Paul of Rhoose, a dearly loved father and grampi.
Resting at the Private Funeral Home of W. James & Sons, Fonmon. Funeral Tuesday, December 29, service and cremation 11am at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry.
Flowers may be sent to the Funeral Home.

Seasons Greetings

Eileen & Tony Bennett & Ruby of Llantwit Major would like to wish all their friends in the Vale a very happy Christmas and best wishes for 2016.

Elizabeth Hiscock, Sandra & Keith
Would like to wish all our family, friends and neighbours a Happy Christmas and a Good New Year with huge thanks to all who have visited and sent regards to mum during her long hospital stay.
Never forgetting our dear 'Polly', we will be making a charitable donation in her memory.
Lots of Love xxx

Sue & Rob Thomas
would like to wish all their dear friends and relations a most blessed and joyous Xmas-tide. May 2016 bring both happiness and good health to all xxx
Once again, this year we are donating to the RNLI and Ty Hafan, in lieu of christmas cards.

Barbara & John Marsh
would like to wish all their friends & neighbours
Christmas Greetings & a Happy New Year.
In lieu of cards, we are sending donations to the Dog's Home.

JOHN & MARY BACON
WOULD LIKE TO WISH THEIR FAMILY, FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS
A MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

HALL
Norma

Peacefully on December 11 at the University Hospital of Wales – Norma, well known for her time as a hospital chaplain at Barry Hospital & UHW, Cardiff. Also a member of All Saints Church Choir. Devoted wife to Mike, much loved mum of Sophie, Scott, James and her faithful dog UGO. Loving mamgu to Isaac, Jonathan, Emma and Thomas. Step mum of Nicola and Michaela.
She will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved her.
Norma is being cared for by Lyndsay Ellis @ The Vale Funeral Service, 181 Court Road, Barry until her service at All Saints Church, Barry on Thursday, December 31 at 10.30am, followed by cremation at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium. Family flowers only – donations if desired may be made via Norma's online tribute page, www.valefuneralservice.co.uk, to support Dogs For Good charity. Further enquiries to Lyndsay J Ellis 01446 407962

STIMPSON
Lee

The family wish to announce the sad passing of Lee on December 11 following his long illness, borne with great dignity, at the age of 42 years.
A much loved son, brother and nephew who will be greatly missed.
Resting in the private chapel of The Vale Funeral Service, 181 Court Road, Barry until his service at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry on Tuesday, December 29 at 2pm. Floral tributes may be sent to the Funeral Home.

BOARD
John Allan
28.2.1928 – 12.12.2015

Peacefully at Llandough Hospital, John of Penmark. Beloved husband for 66 years of Mary, devoted dad of Colin, Clive and Sheila, respected father-in-law of Jenny, Jane and Phillip, adored Bampy John of all his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
Resting at the Private Funeral Home of W. James & Sons, Fonmon. Funeral Tuesday, December 22, service and cremation 1pm at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry. No flowers by request, donations in lieu, if desired, to Ty Hafan Childrens Hospice Wales c/o J James, 11 Fonmon Road, Rhoose, Vale of Glamorgan CF62 3DZ.

RAW
Leonard

Peacefully on December 11 at College Fields Nursing Home, Barry, Len of Rhoose. Beloved husband of the late Jieannie, nee Griffiths, dearly loved father of Jacqui, father-in-law of Brian, much loved grandfather of David and Kerensa and great-grandfather of Holly and Rowan.
Resting at the Private Funeral Home of W. James & Sons, Fonmon. Funeral Tuesday, December 22, service and cremation 10am at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry. No flowers by request, donations in lieu, if desired, to The Stroke Association c/o J James, 11 Fonmon Road, Rhoose, Vale of Glamorgan CF62 3DZ.

JACQUES
Philip

The family of the late Phil wish to thank all friends and acquaintances for the overwhelming amount of cards, flowers and donations received in his memory and for attending his funeral in such high numbers.
Special thanks to Mark B. for his humorous memories of Phil over the years and to Duncan Ballantyne and the staff at A.G. Adams & Son.

SMITH
Graham Edward Bentley

Peacefully at Llandough Hospital, Penarth on December 6th, Graham of Atlantic Place, Barry. Dearly beloved husband of Brenda, devoted father of Karen, loved brother of Austin, loving uncle to all his nieces and nephew.
Resting at A.G. Adams & Son, Tynewydd Funeral Home, Gladstone Road, Barry, until his funeral service and committal at the Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry on Tuesday, December 22nd at 11am. Flowers may be sent to the funeral home.

SUGDEN
Michael James (Jim)

Suddenly at Great Western Hospital Swindon on December 5, Jim aged 73 years. Beloved husband of Sue, much loved dad of Jayne and Gavin, son-in-law Gareth and daughter-in-law Dawn. Adored gramp to Danielle, Perry, Melissa, Jamie and Thomas.
Jim will be sadly missed by all his family and friends.
Resting at A.G. Adams & Son until the funeral service in the chapel of rest on Monday, December 21 at 3pm, followed by committal at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium. Family flowers only, donations in lieu, if so desired, for British Heart Foundation or The Stroke Association c/o the Funeral Director.
At Jim's request please, no black ties.

HILL
Arthur Reynolds

Peacefully in his sleep at Llandough Hospital, Penarth on December 9th, Arthur of Cae Glas, Barry. Dearly beloved husband of the late Doreen, much loved dad of Lynda, Judith and Roger.
Resting at A.G. Adams & Son, Tynewydd Funeral Home, Gladstone Road, Barry until his funeral service in the chapel on Wednesday, December 23 at 4pm, followed by cremation at the Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry at 5pm.
Family flowers only but donations in lieu of flowers to Ty Hafan, The Children's Hospice in Wales, Appeals Office, Hayes Road, Sully, CF64 5XX.

The GEM
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BIRD
Eric Osbourne
23rd December 2014
In loving memory of a dear husband to Judy, father to Simon and Sara, grampy to Sam.
Always in our thoughts, with much love.

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In Memory

HISCOCK
Jennifer Mary

Our 10th Christmas without you.
As we prepare for Christmas,
our thoughts will be of you,
You always made our Christmases
the happiest we ever knew.
We'll try our best to celebrate
the birth of Christ the King.
But in our hearts we realise
we've lost our everything.
Love from your husband Phil. Xxx

Birthday Memories

BIRTHDAY MEMORIES
Jamie Adamson
(25.12.1998 - 20.01.2004)

"Another year has been and gone since you passed away,
But in our hearts and memories you will always stay,
We miss your love and laughter and how we used to play,
So Happy Birthday darling for this coming Christmas Day."
Love always, Daddy, Sam, Denise and family *xxxx*

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and thinking of all the children and staff in hospital over the Christmas period. Thanks to everyone who has supported Jamie's charity (jamfund.co.uk) during the past year.

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12 RENAULT Twingo Dynamique 3-Dr 1.1cc
In Fuchsia red, 39,000 miles, low insurance
£4,695

64 MG3 Style 1.5 VTi 5-Dr
In yellow, 3,000 miles with a/c alloys etc
£7,495

07 TOYOTA Corolla Verso SR D-4D 2.2cc
In silver, 51,000 miles, 1 owner, 7 seater
£4,995

62 **HONDA CRV 2.2 Diesel Automatic** In met silver, 20,000 miles, 4x4, full leather £15,995
62 **AUDI A4 2 Litre Diesel Technik 6 Speed** in red with black leather, 64,000 miles, 1 owner .. REDUCED BY £1000 TO £12,995
54 **VW Transporter 2.5 (130) TDI L/W/B** In silver, too many options to list £11,995
62 **PEUGEOT 308CC 1.6HDi Active** In met-blue, 22,000 mile diesel convertible £9,995
62 **VW Golf 1.6 TDi Match 5-Dr** In white, 41,000 mile diesel hatch £9,995
59 **MERCEDES C180 SE Blue Efficiency Automatic** In met-grey, 35,000 miles.....£9,995
03 **PORSCHE Cayenne 4.5 V8 Tiptronic 'S'** In silver, full black leather, 69,000 miles, 22" alloys, colour coded s/roof sat-nav etc £9,995
61 **NISSAN Qashqai 1.6 Acenta** In black, 33,000 miles, very nice example £9,495
65 **PEUGEOT 108 Active 5-Dr** In white, delivery mileage .....REDUCED BY £500 TO £7,995
62 **VW Polo 1.2 Match 5-Dr** In red, 20,000 miles, 1 owner, superb throughout.....£7,995
62 **CITROEN D53 1.6 Style Plus 3-Dr** In white with black roof, 33,000 miles, 1 owner £7,995
62 **FIAT Diablo 1.6 Multi Jet Diesel Eleganza** In met grey, 41,000 miles, 1 owner example £7,995
61 **SKODA Fabia 1.6 Diesel Scout Crios Estate** In met grey, 23,000 miles.....£7,995
11 **PEUGEOT 3008 Exclusive 1.6 HDi** In met bronze, 52,000 mile diesel at £7,995
64 **MG3 3 Style 1.5 VTi 5-Dr** In yellow, 3,000 miles with a/c alloys etc £7,495
62 **SUZUKI Swift 1.2 SZ4 5-Dr** In black, 16,000 miles, 1 owner, high spec.....£7,495
12 **SKODA Roomster 1.6 TDi SE Plus** In black, 39,000 miles, 1 owner £7,495
12 **FORD Fiesta Titanium TDCi 70 1.4cc** In silver, 36,000 miles, alloys, bluetooth.....£7,495
62 **PEUGEOT 208 1.4 Active, 3-Dr** metallic purple, 16,000 miles, low insurance £6,995
62 **SEAT Ibiza 1.4 SE 5-Dr** In verde lime, 22,000 miles, 1 owner .....REDUCED BY £500 TO £6,995
12 **TOYOTA Yaris TR VVTi 5-Dr 1.3cc** 24,000 miles, met blue, sat nav, bluetooth, alloys £6,995
11 **SKODA Octavia 1.4 TSi SE Plus 5-Dr** In met-grey, 55,000 miles, 1 owner with sat-nav £6,995
10 **FORD Fiesta 1.6 TDCi Titanium 5-Dr** In silver, 48,000 miles, low running costs £6,995
59 **VW Golf Plus 1.4 TSi SE** In silver, 50,000 miles, host of extras, superb example £6,995
09 **MERCEDES B180 Sport Diesel 2.0 CDi** In black, 76,000 miles .....REDUCED BY £1000 TO £6,995
55 **AUDI A8 3.2 FSi (L.W.B.) SE Auto** In black, with black leather, 85,000 miles, superb at.....£6,995
61 **VAUXHALL Insignia 1.8 Exclusive** In silverlake, 43,000 miles, 1 owner £6,795
14 **HYUNDAI i20 1.2 Active 3-Dr** In black, 18,000 miles, 1 owner, makers warranty £6,495
13 **MAZDA 2 TS 1.3TS 5-Dr** In red, 17,000 miles, 1 owner, £30 road tax £6,495
13 **VAUXHALL Corsa 1.2 SXi 3-Dr** In gunmetal grey, 16,000 miles, 1 owner £6,495
61 **SUZUKI SX4 1.6 SZ4** In met-copper, 16,000 miles, very nice throughout £6,495
10 **VAUXHALL Astra 1.4 SE Turbo 5-Dr** In silver, 55,000 miles, nice example £6,495
14 **PEUGEOT 107 (998cc) Allure 5-Dr** In met silver, 17,000 miles.....£5,995
12 **SKODA Fabia 1.2 SE 4-Dr** In silver, 24,000 miles, very nice example at £5,995
61 **SKODA Fabia 1.2 TDi Greenlink 5-Dr** In red, 50,000 miles, 1 owner, "Free road tax" £5,995
61 **RENAULT Megane 1.6 Dynamique Tom-Tom 5-Dr** In steel blue, 41,000 miles.....£5,995
61 **FORD Fiesta 1.2 Edge 5-Dr** In silver, 26,000 miles, 1 owner, a/c .....REDUCED BY £500 TO £5,995
59 **SEAT Leon Ecomotive 1.9 TDi 'S'** In black, 71,000 miles, £30 road tax.....£5,995
60 **SKODA Fabia 1.6 Diesel SE 5-Dr** In silver, 56,000 miles, low running costs.....£5,695
08 **FORD Mondeo 2.0 TDCi Ghia Automatic** In silver, 69,000 miles, diesel hatch £5,695

63 **FIAT Punto 1.2 Pop 5-Dr** In white, 11,000 miles, 1 owner, ...REDUCED BY £1000 TO £5,495
11 **HYUNDAI i20 1.4 Comfort 5-Dr** In met-grey, 23,000 miles, 1 owner £5,495
09 **FORD C-Max Zetec 2.0 TDi** In met-blue, 69,000 miles, ideal family car at ....REDUCED BY £500 TO £5,495
58 **MINI ONE 1.4 (6-Speed)** In pepper white, 70,000 miles with pan-roof, pepper pack etc.....£5,495
59 **HONDA Jazz 1.4 V-Tec Ex** In electric blue, sought after model with panoramic roof £5,295
62 **KIA Picanto 1.0 5-Dr** In black, 41,000 miles, 1 owner, free-road-tax £4,995
62 **HYUNDAI i10 Classic 1.2 5-Dr** In silver, 13,000 miles, £20 road tax.....£4,995
62 **HYUNDAI i10 Classic 1.2 5-Dr** In met-grey, 19,000 miles, low running costs.....£4,995
10 **SKODA Fabia 1.4 TDi Estate** In silver, 50,000 miles, low running costs REDUCED BY £1000 TO £4,995
10 **FORD Fiesta 1.4 Zetec 3-Dr** In electric blue, 51,000 miles with a/c £4,995
59 **FORD Fiesta 1.2 Zetec 3-Dr** In black, 52,000 miles with alloys a/c etc ..REDUCED BY £500 TO £4,995
59 **FORD Fiesta 1.2 Zetec 3-Dr** In electric blue, only 27,000 miles from new..... REDUCED BY £500 TO £4,995
09 **TOYOTA IQ Auto VVTi 1.0cc** In white, red leather suede trim, loads of extras.....£4,995
58 **VW Polo 1.4 TDi 5-Dr Match** In silver, 38,000 miles, low running costs £4,995
08 **HYUNDAI i30 Premium 2.0 CRDi Diesel 5-Dr** In silver with leather, 41,000 miles.....£4,995
07 **TOYOTA Corolla Verso SR D-4D 2.2cc** In silver, 51,000 miles, 1 owner, 7 seater £4,995
60 **SMART Fortwo 1.0 Pulse Automatic** In met-black, 24,000 miles with a/c etc £4,795
58 **MAZDA 6 TS2 Diesel 2.0 5-Dr** In met-black, 74,000 mile family hatch £4,795
13 **CITREON C1, VT 3 door** sky blue, 18,000 miles, one owner £4,695
12 **RENAULT Twingo Dynamique 3-Dr 1.1cc** Fuchsia red, 39,000 miles, low insurance £4,695
60 **FORD Ka 1.2 Zetec** In silver, 50,000 miles with a/c, alloys etc £4,495
62 **CHEVROLET Spark 1.2 Spark** In black, 41,000 miles, £30 road tax £4,295
10 **TOYOTA IQ 1.0 VVTi** In crystal white, 54,000 miles with Ipod connection, a/c etc £4,295
59 **SMART Fortwo Passion Auto** In red/silver, 21,000 miles, glass roof etc £4,295
59 **NISSAN Note 1.4 Accenta** In black, 68,000 miles, economical hatch £4,295
07 **FORD Fusion 1.6 Automatic Zetec** In glacier blue, 33,000 miles with a/c £3,995
55 **FORD Galaxy Ghia 1.9 TDDi** In silver, 87,000 miles, 7 seater, privacy glass, p/s £3,995
58 **MITSUBISHI Colt CZ2 Convertible 1.5cc** In silver, 57,000, silver, p/s £3,495
07 **NISSAN Micra 1.2 Spirata 5-Dr** In silver, only 38,000 miles with a/c etc £3,495
04 **HONDA CRV Executive 2.0 Automatic** In met-blue with leather trim, nice example £3,495
07 **NISSAN Micra 1.6 Sport Convertable** In met wine, 59,000 miles, 1 owner £3,295
57 **SEAT Ibiza 1.2 Reference 5-Dr** In met grey 53,000 miles, low insurance .....REDUCED BY £1000 TO £2,995
07 **FIAT Panda Dynamic Diesel** in silver, 66,000 miles, fantastic mpg. Low road tax and insurance....£2,995
05 **FORD Focus 1.6 Ghia 5-Dr** In glacier blue, 52,000 miles, very nice exmaple at £2,995
56 **SMART City Passion Automatic** In met blue, 38,000 miles with a/c, c/d etc £2,795

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'Blast from the Past' – 1997

How the 'experts' and Racing Post were put right!

by BRIAN LEE

BACK in 1997 – and if the Racing Post and all the television racing scribes and turf historians were to believed – *Stately Home*, trained by Haverfordwest's Peter Bowen had become the first horse in the 20th century to achieve 10 chase wins in a season and was awarded the Channel 4 Racing Trophy.

However, I knew differently and phoned Chepstow trainer Milton Bradley as I was sure that his *Grey Dolphin* had won 10 chases during the 1978/79 season. Milton, after giving it some thought, was able to confirm that I was right and in fact his *Grey Dolphin* had won 10 chases during that season as I had said.

I faxed my findings to the Racing Post to inform them that all the racing journalists had forgotten that Milton Bradley's *Grey Dolphin* had also won 10 handicap chases in a season.

A few days later, I received a phone call from the Racing Post's statistician John Randall telling me that I was correct and that he would do justice to *Grey Dolphin* by writing an article in the Racing Post, listing the horse's achievements along with that of Bradley's *Mighty Marine*, which I had also mentioned in the fax that I had sent to the Racing Post.

However, imagine how I felt when I read in the 1996/1997 Timeform Chasers & Hurdlers Annual, recognised as the National Hunt 'bible', that the Racing Post's John Randall was given the credit of 'reminding racing journalists of their short memories'!

For the record, during the 1970s, Milton Bradley's other prolific winner *Mighty Marine* won 24 races and won seven consecutive races in the space of five weeks and three days.

'BRIDGEND BUTCHER BRINGS HOME THE BACON'

Bridgend butcher Jonathon Tudor came in for a spare ride at the Golden Valley Hunt Steeplechases at Bredwardine and brought home the bacon when landing the restricted open race on 12-1 chance *Ollardale*.

Ollardale, who had been pulled up on its two previous starts this season, finished 12 lengths ahead of *Derring Ann* ridden by west Wales' Dai Jones.

Julian Pritchard, who looks like clinching the national men's point-to-point championship, brought his season's tally of wins to 34 with a treble on *Lets Twist Again* (confined), *Nether Gobions* (men's open) and *Robero* (maiden division one).

Nether Gobion came home 12 lengths clear of the Llangibby horse *Archer* with the Llangeinor mare *Doubting Donna*, under reigning champion Jamie Jukes, a futher 16 lengths away in third place.

Rip Van Winkle, confidently ridden by leading rider Alison Dare, made it four wins in a row in the ladies' open race when accounting for *Bowland Girl* and *Howaryadoon*.

Pip Jones' mount *Most Interesting* was pulled up. *Merger Man*, a five year old described by the experts as having 'no sign of ability' and ridden by David Mansell, was a 14-1 winner of the seond division of the maiden.

Sea Tarth, who ran in four point-to-points for Pembrokeshire's Fred Luff last season, and who failed to complete the course on each occasion was a 33-1 winner of the bumper (National Hunt flat race) at Bangor-on-Dee for Pembrokeshire trainer Peter Bowen.

You can e-mail your news, views or pictures to brianlee4@virginmedia.com or phone 02920736438

Another Chepstow win for Janet

THE Vale's Mrs Janet Davies had another winner at Chepstow Racecourse when her four-year-old bay gelding *Positively Dylan* landed the closing bumper (National Hunt flat race).

Trained by Llancarfan's Evan Williams, newcomer *Positively Dylan* ran on well under Lewis Gordon in the closing stages to score by two-and-a-half lengths from *Pride of Lecale*.

At the previous November Chepstow fixture, Mrs Davies saw her *Maxanisi*, also trained by Evan Williams, win a novices' hurdle race.

BRIAN LEE

Go to the **The GEM** for the latest stories and breaking news...
www.barry-today.co.uk
www.cowbridge-today.co.uk
www.llantwit-major-today.co.uk
www.bridgend-today.co.uk
www.porthcawl-today.co.uk

Bridge news from Barrivale

THE latest results from Barrivale Bridge Club for December 8 are as follows:

First, Mark Roderick and Mick Green, 63.10 per cent; second, Denis Mottram and Peter Millar, 63.02 per cent; third, Jenny Vaughan and Irene Thomas, 59.38 per cent.

Reg Dyer and Ken Hannah won on handicap.

New members are always welcome at Barrivale. Telephone 01446 418380 or 01446 733425 or call at the Pioneer Hall, Beryl Road, Barry, on Tuesdays at 7pm.

DR

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Tristan Greedy would like to inform all of his customers that due to business expansion they have moved from the Heritage Business Park, Wick Rd, Llantwit Major to their new premises (next door to the Post Office sorting office), Llandow, Vale Business Park - and it's business as normal.

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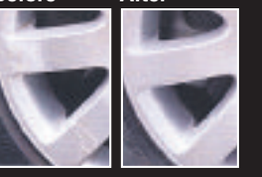
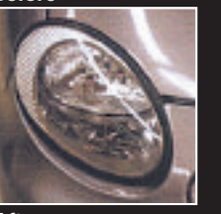


Before



After

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Winning golfers Julian Golunski, Dan Jarvis, Neil McLean with society captain Brian Jones.

Dan the man at RAF St Athan

EXTREMELY wet conditions underfoot proved an unwelcome experience to the 32 members of the Glamorgan Farmers' Golf Society who assembled at RAF St Athan Golf Club last Thursday for their Christmas meeting.

Thankfully the condition of the greens which many found difficult in locating were up to their usual high standard, enabling just a few to return respectable scores.

Dan Jarvis with 32 stableford points finished in first place to collect the RAF St Athan trophy together with seasonal prizes of port, whiskey, wine and a bottle of his favourite Prosecco.

Neil Mclean finished runner-up with 29 points followed by four members who all finished with 27 points. With the better back nine proving the deciding factor, society captain Brian Jones took the last bottle of port, leaving Julian Golunski, Clive Thomas and Tosh Taylor to take home boxes of biscuits or chocolate.

Dai John was rescued from having to undertake his dreaded annual Christmas shopping trip to the Principality when returning home with two tins of seasonal sweets and two bottles of wine when being nearest the pin on two of the four par three holes. Martin David and Keith James were also successful in this category.

Neil McLean hit the longest drive on the selected hole to win the Bear Hotel, Cowbridge sponsored prize and Clive Edwards topped up his drinks cabinet when returning home with the Premier Turf sponsored bottle of whisky.

Clive correctly guessed 34 balls would fail to return home with unfortunately quite a few lost in the saturated fairways.

Jim Hayes' consistent form was once again recognised when collecting the best endeavour prize, just seeing off the challenge of Dai Llewellyn.

The biggest smile of the day belonged to Aubrey Thomas who collected a large box of chocolates when returning the highest score in the 'over-80s' category, therefore solving his Christmas shopping problem.

John Davies finished runner-up in this category for the 'veteran veterans' followed by Aubrey Bowen and Glyn Watts-Jones.

Mention must be made of the excellent evening meal prepared by caterer Leanne, enjoyed by the competitors, and also special guest John Lee who is now an honorary member of the society.

Thanks also to the members of the society for raising £60 for the Llantwit Major Lifeguards.

Finally society captain Brian Jones and the committee of the Glamorgan Farmers' Golf Society wish golfers throughout the Vale a very happy and blessed Christmas and New Year.

T.McC

THE COTTRELL LADIES CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS!

ON Thursday, December 10, Cottrell Park Ladies celebrated Christmas.

Unfortunately the morning competition was cancelled due to the poor weather conditions, but 66 ladies attended the prize-giving in the beautifully decorated Tyler cabin.

The prizes were presented by the ladies' captain Helen Poole and were awarded to the following: Megan Cullinane, Cup of Achievement; Vicki Long, Lady Golfer of the Year, Par Competition, Summer Eclectic Mac; Helen Poole Birdie Tree, Llanfair Trophy, Summer Eclectic Button; Cath Domican, Dragon Brooch; Kay Bradbury, Macmillan Spoon; Rusty Fone, LGU Breakthrough Cancer Brooch; Judy James, Golf Foundation Brooch; Lorraine Pointon-Bell, Grandmothers Trophy; Liz Overton, Pencarrig Cup; Chris Impey, Super Seventies.

There were 18 Stableford winners with Helen Evans achieving five and 11 Medal winners,with Vicki Long achieving four. Helen thanked Patsie Smith, competition secretary, for her assistance.

Following the prize giving there was entertainment by the committee with Christmas songs, prior to a delicious Christmas lunch enjoyed by all.

Chris Evans was announced as the new vice captain - she thanked Helen Poole for the table presents and for organising the day so well.

Angela Padfield was thanked for the lovely table decorations. Helen thanked everyone for their support and wished them a happy Christmas, this was followed by coffee and carols.

CB

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TYRES EXHAUSTS BATTERIES BRAKES SUSPENSION MOT

Up stepped Bruce to slam the ball into the net to cheers from travelling fans...

Oh what fun it is – when Dinas win away!

Penrhiwceiber Rangers 1, Dinas Powys 2
by PETER KING

WITH the majority of fixtures played on grass pitches falling foul of the weather, Dinas travelled to Penrhiwceiber half expecting the referee to call the game off but, despite driving rain and a very heavy pitch, the match went ahead.

The hosts settled first and won an early corner which was cleared and they continued to press for the first 10 minutes, the closest they came to scoring being a good through ball to Neil Evans but he shot wide.

Dinas began to settle and a ball out to Ryan Garland saw him close in on goal but he got underneath his shot which cleared the cross bar by some distance. Good work by Rhys Palmer put Adam Johns in on goal but he was crowded out by the Ceiber defence before he could get a shot away.

On the 15 minute mark Dinas were awarded a free kick just inside the Ceiber half. Nicky Bruce stepped up and hit a superb shot to open the scoring, giving the Ceiber keeper Alex Bailey no chance.

The hosts stepped up their work rate and had Dinas under pressure, forcing two corners which James Curtin, the Dinas keeper dealt with.

The visitors weathered the pressure and a superb through ball from Nathan Donnelly found Rhys Palmer who used his pace to get within striking distance but his effort was just wide of the left upright.

However Ceiber were looking dangerous at times, winning two further corners which the Dinas defence dealt with.

However, on the 32 minute mark Brandon Davies received the ball on the edge of the Dinas area, side-stepped a tackle and hit a superb shot into the top corner of the net for the equaliser.

Dinas were dealt a further blow five minutes before the interval when Mason Ah-Mun pulled up with a hamstring injury and was replaced by Luke Swaffield and the half ended all square at 1-1 with Ceiber shading the possession.

Whatever the Dinas management team of Lee Saunders and Rob Bloxham said in their half-time team talk certainly worked wonders as, apart from the first few minutes of the second half, Dinas got more and more on top, creating numerous scoring opportunities as the pitch began to cut up and their superior fitness began to show.

LINK-UP PLAY

James Marr had the first chance hitting a hard low shot just wide from 30 yards, and it was Marr again who hit the left upright a few minutes later and the Ceiber defence managed to scramble the ball away.

Then good link up play down the left wing and a good ball in to Adam Johns looked promising but he fluffed his shot in the atrocious conditions.

Dinas sensed the win was there for the taking and rang the changes with 20 minutes of the half gone. Tom Edwards replaced Ryan Garland and a few minutes later the hard working Scott Muir made way for Adam Jones.

It was really backs to the wall time for Penrhiwceiber then as they visibly tired, and any time they did manage to play a ball forward, Donnelly and James Bloxham in particular were diving forward to head the ball back into Dinas possession.

Adam Jones soon got into the action for Dinas, squaring a ball to Johns but he was driven wide and his shot from an acute angle was just the wrong side of the right post.

Palmer then looked to have scored when a defender hit a ball against his legs and it rolled towards the goal-line but a defender just managed to hook it away.

With time running out it looked as if a draw was inevitable but, just a minute from time, Johns was chopped down in the box, the referee pointing straight to the penalty spot.

Up stepped Bruce to slam the ball high into the net to a tremendous cheer from the travelling supporters, to give Dinas the win that their recent play has warranted.

Squad: 1 James Curtin, 2 Rhys Harlin, 3 Mason Ah-Mun, 4 James Bloxham, 5 Nathan Donnelly, 6 James Marr (c), 7 Ryan Garland, 8 Nicky Bruce (2), 9 Scott Muir, 10 Adam Johns, 11 Rhys Palmer, 12 Tom Edwards, 14 Luke Swaffield, 15 Adam Jones, 16 Keiron James.

Next Saturday, December 19, Croesyceiliog visit the Murch (weather permitting), 2pm kick off.

Cowbridge RFC makes progress in SWALEC Bowl

LAST Saturday Cowbridge hosted Milford Haven in the third round of the prestigious SWALEC Bowl.

The visitors play in West Wales League 3A and had lost just once this season. On a breezy, damp, muddy afternoon, this proved to be one of the best games of the season with both teams giving their all from start to finish.

Cowbridge showed their intent from the off. Cowbridge were solid in the first scrum and spun the ball out to the wing; the attack broke down but from the ensuing maul second row Lewys Hopkins secured the ball and charged over for a fine try after just two minutes.

Milford Haven fought back immediately but were unable to capitalise on a succession of penalties awarded to them. Cowbridge then struck a purple patch of running rugby in poor conditions.

The front row of Dai Popham, Ieuan Griffiths and Ben Worall provided a great platform and second rows Hopkins and Alex Lewis were winning plenty of quality line-out ball.

The backs must have created five or six scoring chances in the next 20 minutes. Ash Thomas and Duncan Evans were both brought down yards from the line, and captain Huw Lougher was inches away after a quick tap penalty by scrum half Richie Howsen. All the while, No. 10 Alec Guard was distributing the ball, but no tries came.

Cowbridge finally added to the score on the 25th minute from the reliable boot of full back Ben Wright. Unfortunately two minutes later flanker Connor Boys was harshly yellow carded and the big visiting pack battered the Cowbridge line and despite some great defence, particularly from back rowers Emyr Stone and Rhod Walker, eventually barged over for an unconverted try.

Cowbridge were on the attack straight from the kick off and from good lineout ball in the 22, some fine passing along the Cowbridge backs resulted in a try in the corner for flying wing Duncan Evans, followed by a tremendous conversion by Ben Wright.

Unfortunately top try scorer Will Williams took a nasty hit just before half-time to be replaced by Chris Roberts-Walters, the score at half-time Cowbridge 15, Milford Haven 5.

The second half started very much like the first with a great chase by Emyr Stone putting Cowbridge on the front foot and a lovely break by wing Evans almost resulted in a try for Rhod Walker.

It was all breathtaking stuff as both teams attacked at every opportunity and the visitors' pack spent much time in the Cowbridge 22 only to be repelled time and time again by the Cowbridge pack that refused to give in.

Connor Boys put in some particularly big hits. However, with minutes to go, Milford Haven were awarded a series of penalties and the pressure finally told as they scored in the corner.

With the Cowbridge faithful holding their breath, the conversion sailed wide. With just a minute to go Milford Haven attacked and one wondered whether Cowbridge would rue missing all those missed opportunities in the first half.

It was not to be for the visitors as Cowbridge stole the ball from the advancing maul and it was all over, the final score Cowbridge 15, Millford Haven 10.

The game was a credit to both sides who gave their all for the full 80 minutes in very difficult conditions with attractive rugby throughout.

Cowbridge deserved the win for creating so many chances with some great running rugby, but it couldn't have been a more nailbiting finish.

Milford Haven stayed for a few hours after and it a pleasure to see both teams and supporters having such a good time together in the clubhouse afterwards.

The youth took on Aberdare on the Police Field, better described as a mudbath. Despite that, both teams attempted to run the ball and Cowbridge missed several opportunities, suffering from a lack of finishing.

Outstanding for Cowbridge were Ben Jones at No.8 and flanker Dan Holder. Unfortunately one of the Aberdare players suffered a nasty knee injury and we wish him a speedy recovery.

The youth have some exciting fixtures coming up. On January 2 they take on St Peters as a curtain raiser for Cardiff v Llanelli at the Arms Park, kick off 12 noon. On January 23 they play Buenos Aires at Llandaff North, more details at a later date.

The first team have their final fixture of 2015 this Saturday, December 19, away at Tonyrefail; this has been moved from December 26; the first game of 2016 will be on January 2 at home against Tylorstown.

RV/RK/GT

Black tie dinner for past captains

BRYNHILL past captains held their gala dinner on Friday, December 11.

The captains and their guests enjoyed an excellent meal by the club caterers, Gareth and Mark Dommett.

The past captains entertained the guests with an impromptu sing song. Many of the guests thought that they should start a choir as their voices sounded so good.

Thanks go to the organiser Mr Tony Cook for all his hard work, which made a very enjoyable evening for everyone.

JK

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Sports under-10s fired up in Llantwit clashes

BRIDGEND Sports under-10s were fired up for Sunday's round robin fixtures against Llantwit Fardre and Llantwit Major.

With one game in the last four weeks, the players and coaches were determined that the weather was not going to frustrate their efforts for a further week.

The omens looked good as the sun made a brief appearance and the Blue and Whites won the toss to start the first game against the fancied Llantwit Fardre side, but it was the Fardre that scored first as the Sports were forced into touch from an early run.

Fardre re-started play quickly to put their players in space, where the lively Steffan Emmanuel sprinted down the touchline from halfway to score.

The Sports did not let the score dampen their enthusiasm.

They soon put together some delightful phases of play, with good rucking combined with some deft off-loading and handling skills that soon paid dividends.

Joel Rogers split the defence with a skilful run into space to score the try that brought the scores level. It was then a case of a focused defensive effort that denied Llantwit Fardre possession with Iestyn John, Joel Rogers and Hari Williams prominent in the tackle area.

Hari Williams was rewarded for his efforts as he supported play, waited for a pass and then spotted a gap in defence to score from six metres out. Cian John secured a three tries to one lead going into half-time for Bridgend Sports when he simply left the away team dead in their tracks following a typical jinking run to the line from 15 metres out.

With Llantwit Fardre starting the game in the second half, the Sports needed to ensure their defensive effort reached the high standard of their attacking prowess in the first half.

They did not disappoint with some solid tackling and effort from Callum Lewis, Cian John, Joel Rogers and Hari Williams. They soon robbed their opponents of possession to set Cian John free again, as he raced in for his second try.

Llantwit Fardre raised their game in response and showed their quality to level the second half score when they worked the ball wide for Lewis Harris to sprint down the wing to score the final try of the game to take the score to 4-2 in Bridgend Sports favour.

Llantwit Major faced the Blue and Whites next; the Red and Blacks could not darken the home team's spirit and ambition to play open, attractive running rugby.

The rugby they produced brought a smile to supporters. It clearly showed the young players are beginning to adapt to the challenge of physical contact game at the ruck and tackle area. The home team scored two tries, one from Joel Rogers and the other from Callum Lewis, before Llantwit Major registered their first try.

The Sports' confidence was growing and it was not long before the two try lead was restored when Mackenzie Dent made a run. He was tackled, butHari Williams cleaned out at the ruck, for Mason Balmer, Dewi Worralll and Tom Chick to combine and take play deep into the Llantwit Major half, before passing to Ieuan Pilliner.

He received the ball 10 metres out, he changed the angle of attack and span out of a tackle to score.

Joel Rogers was next to score, as Dylan Morgan gathered a loose Llantwit Major kick, made a break to set up a ruck Joe Rogers received the ball from the ruck, with plenty to do.

He used his pace and eye for the gap to cut through the defence to score his hat-trick of tries for the morning.

Cian John was not to be outdone and he claimed his third when he received the ball on the halfway line; he set off on a run full of pace before throwing the opposition with a couple of side steps to score.

It was another John, this time Iestyn John, who scored next, following good support and handling skills displayed by Hari Williams, Mason Balmer, Cian John and Dewi Worrall.

Hari Williams popped up again to change the angle before the ball was passed onto Iestyn John to score.

Llantwit Major, to their great credit, halted the Sports' momentum by scoring next, but it was Joel Rogers who had the last say of the half as he claimed his fourth try to give Bridgend Sports a 7-2 lead.

With a healthy lead the Sports entered the final period with the same level of determination that they started the day with. Llantwit Major attacked from the start but the Sports snuffed out each attack through solid tackling and counter rucking.

From one ruck, the ball was worked to Bailey Llewellyn Hopkins who showed good skill when he took the ball into a ruck and placed it well for fellow players to gather and move it quickly to Joel Rogers who sprinted in to score.

Hari Williams claimed his second try before the final score of the day saw Ben King take the ball five metres from his own line and run the length of the field, breaking several tackles to secure the overall 10 points to two win for the Sports.

In the final game of the morning it was Fardre that over powered the Major with a six points to nil win to conclude an excellent morning of rugby.

SP

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WALES TO PLAY ENGLAND, SLOVAKIA AND RUSSIA AT EURO 2016, BUT...

Let's not get distracted by this 'battle of Britain!

THERE was something almost fateful as Wales found themselves drawn in Group B of the 2016 European Championships with Roy Hodgson's England.

With England a top seed and Chris Coleman's men, along with Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, in the bottom seeds, a 'battle of Britain' seemed a certainty, but the draw which pitted the dragon against the three lions had an almost predictable air about it.

With Slovakia and Russia making up the other half of the group, focus almost immediately went on the home nations, something that both managers were keen to play down, sensibly so as the tournament is far more than just one game against the rivals from across the Severn Bridge.

It's a kind group for Wales, one that could have been better, could have been worse, but one that is certainly eminently qualifiable from, with the four best third-placed teams reaching the knock-out stages along with the top two from each group.

A top two finish isn't beyond the means of a confident and talented Welsh team who proved in qualifying that they are match for any side, notably taking four points from the two games against FIFA's best team in the world, Belgium.

While both Russia and Slovakia will testing opposition, they are certainly beatable, but the big test will come from an England side who - whisper it quietly - have shown the potential to be one of the teams of the tournament.

While neither side will be sidetracked by media hype, there's no doubt that this game will have a extra edge to it - but it will be a mark of how far Coleman's team have come to see how they fare against our neighbours.

One thing's for sure - it's going to be a thrill ride of a tournament!

GARETH JAMIESON

'Big G' is remembered on day...

Bridgend Athletic put in a 'gutsy' display against league leaders

Man of the Match, Athletic captain, flanker Sean Williams with prop Matt Muir in support

Ath flanker Ben Howe chased by Merthyr captain Andy Powell

IMAGES by GLENSPORTS

Ath centre Aled Thomas with No 8 Stuart Edbrook in support.

Bridgend Athletic 11
Merthyr Tydfil 36

The Athletic will be pleased that the decision to play all home games at the Bridgend Ford Brewery Field was vindicated with the largest home gate of the season so far.

The watching Merthyr benefactor Sir Stan Thomas, however, may wonder if his huge investment in the visiting side is proving value for money.

Merthyr deservedly won this game, mainly through having a superior replacements bench, but the actual gap between the two sides was not reflected in the final score.

When you take into account the huge financial investment made by Merthyr in a squad handpicked by a coaching squad not long ago involved at regional and Premiership level, it makes you wonder if this is the right policy in taking Welsh rugby at this level forward.

Compared to that scenario the Ath field a side of players in the main produced from within its mini, junior, youth and second team structure on a minimal budget and a strict no payment to players basis.

True the Ath were blown away in the last minutes of the game, but until then it was a closely contested game.

The difference on the day was a superior replacement bench. Of the 25 points differential, the Athletic thought 14 of those were gifted through referee Elfed Roberts of Swansea, awarding two converted tries when it appeared on both occasions the chasers were clearly yards in front of the kicker and therefore offside

It was also felt there were forward passes and knock ons which seemed to favour the visitors.

The game was keenly contested and played in a thoroughly sporting manner with no cards on either side, a rare occurrence these days.

Merthyr opened the scoring with a try by Matthew Jarvis which he also converted to establish a seven point lead.

The try was reminiscent of the Lloyd Williams, Gareth Davies World Cup score against England but on this occasion it seemed obvious to everyone except the referee that Jarvis was yards in front of the executed kick.

An excellent touch kick from ever improving fly half Scott Govan put the Ath deep into Merthyr territory.

A Merthyr infringement following a lineout offence resulted in a scrum, giving the Ath possession and a precision passing movement resulted in an excellent try in the right hand corner for wing Craig Lewis.

A further Merthyr try from wing Daniel Parry, converted by Jarvis, stretched the visitors' lead, but the home side clawed back a penalty following a driving maul offence. Lewis Evans converted the penalty, making the score 8-17 at the break.

Early in the second half, the home side reduced the score with a further penalty but as the game progressed the visitors' superior bench started to influence the game.

Explosive Merthyr prop James Howe crossed and his try was quickly followed by powerhouse second row Craig Locke crossing.

The last Merthyr try was a repeat of their first when eventual scorer Rhys Downes clearly profited from several Merthyr players being ahead of the kick before he eventually touched down.

Athletic back division coach Stuart Morris said he and his fellow coaches were extremely pleased with this display against the table leaders and commented on the gutsy display of the home side, highlighting the massive performance of his man of the match, captain Sean Williams.

Based on this display, the Ath, following wins against Newbridge and Bargoed, would appear to be in a false position in the league table.

Forthcoming games against Llanharan, Newcastle Emlyn, Glynneath and Beddau hopefully will see them rectify this situation and climb the table.

They are only five points adrift of sixth placed Beddau. The Boxing Day fixture against Newcastle Emlyn will now take place on Monday, December 28 at the Brewery Field, kick off 2.30pm.

The club is extremely grateful to Simon Thomas and Paul Jenkins for sponsoring the game, particularly as it was played to commemorate the death of club stalwart Gerwyn Phillips who passed away suddenly seven years ago.

A social evening was held in the club following the game to celebrate Big G's memory. Who can forget he and brother Meirion in US army fatigues and their clubhouse rendition of 'here we go'?

Gareth Davies

Bridgend Athletic Seconds secure a double over Brackla

On Saturday, December 12, Bridgend Athletic second XV recorded a seasonal Mid Glamorgan Premier League double over Brackla.

However, adverse playing conditions meant there was no repeat of the bonus point of earlier in the season, the Athletic having to settle for three tries in a 17-0 victory.

Try scorers were Aaron Mordecai, Chris Price and Josh Miles with Scott Jones adding a conversion. Nick Jones playing at flanker was nominated man of the match.

Adrian Burt